

GABRIEL'S WAR.

BY JAMES D. M'CABE, JR.

SIXTY years is a long time, but when viewed in connection with some event of more than ordinary moment, the period seems short indeed. Those of us who do not date our experience so far back, can hardly realize this, and must accept the avowals of their seniors that incidents of such remote occurrence seem to them like the affairs of yesterday. It has been the good fortune of the writer of these pages to pass a large portion of his life in the society of an aged relative (whose days are now ended), whose long and eventful life, reaching back to the very infancy of our country, was rich in experience and traditionary lore. From her he has heard many a legend story of the old time, and among them, the following:

Sixty years ago—perhaps not quite so far back—the capital of Virginia, was a mere village, whose only importance was derived from the fact of its being the State government. The country around it was very different from what it is now. Then, the plantations were large and distant from each other, and containing great numbers of slaves; now, these huge estates have been cut up into small thrifty farms, many of which are, or were, previous to the late war, what are called “truck farms.” Leaving Richmond by what is known as the Brook Turnpike, one passes through a country now famous for the great events which have recently transpired there. Four miles beyond the city is a deep and picturesque valley, consisting of a large meadow, enclosed between two abrupt ranges of hills, which form, on both sides, an extensive plateau, broken only by this valley. Through the meadow, and nearer the hills on the Richmond side, runs a small stream, known as “The Brook,” from which the turnpike takes its name. Ordinarily, this “Brook” is only a few feet deep, and may be easily forded by a boy; but at times, especially after the heavy spring rains, it is a deep and rapid stream, and, in many places, capable of overcoming the most persistent efforts of the stoutest horse to swim it. The turnpike crosses it by a bridge; but even this is sometimes swept away by the water. After

gaining the hills on the opposite side, the road plunges into what was once a heavy forest, but which has now given place to handsome farms, leaving only a small grove. Three miles further on, is an old weather-stained building, now unused and going to ruin, but once a favorite summer resort, famous then as the “Yellow Tavern,” and now celebrated as the spot where the Southern cavalry leader, General Stuart, met his death wound. Here a branch road turns abruptly to the right, and pursues its way through the woods to the farms which border the Chickahominy River—in this locality, a mere swamp.

As I have stated, this part of the country was, at the commencement of the present century, but very thinly settled. That portion lying between the turnpike and the swamp was almost an unbroken forest. Only a few plantations had been cleared up, and these lay immediately on the borders of the stream. One of these had been settled about the year 1788, by a gentleman of great wealth and high social position. It was one of the most extensive estates in the country, and was provided with an unusually large force of negroes. Mr. Hastings was held in high esteem by his neighbors. He was a kind master, and his slaves were very much attached to him. During his lifetime the estate was thoroughly cleared up, and at his death, which happened only a few years previous to the opening of this story, was in a flourishing and promising condition. He was succeeded by his only child, a young man of about twenty-four years. He was, like his father, a frank, open-hearted gentleman, and soon gained the position in the public esteem that his sire had held. When he was twenty-six he married, and, at the time of his introduction to the reader, was the father of one child.

As a master, Mr. Hastings was kind and indulgent. His chief desire was to make his slaves happy, and he went even beyond the ordinary customs of his class, and spared no effort to better the condition of his sable servitors. As a consequence, he was very much beloved by them, and, doubtless, had nothing happened to mar the happiness of

his domestic relations, he would have gone to his grave sincerely lamented by the blacks, as their best and most beloved friend. But men are not apt to allow feelings of any kind to stand in the way to their attainment of the greatest of earthly blessings. The poor negroes, groping in the worse than Egyptian darkness by which they were surrounded, saw only the bright light of freedom shining far in the distance, and heard that mysterious voice, which comes alike to all of God's creatures, calling them to it. Another voice whispered that the only pathway to it led through the blood of their masters, and they could not hold back from it, even though they loved and honored those who held them in bondage. We would condemn no one. The system alone was to blame. It contained strange contradictions, and gave rise to deep inconsistencies and dark tragedies.

One afternoon in the early spring, Mr. Hastings left Richmond for his home in the country. He had been detained in the city a little later than usual, and it was now near the hour of sunset; but as his horse was a genuine racer, imported direct from the mother country, he had no doubt of being able to reach his home before dark. As he crossed "the brook," he noticed that the bridge was insecure, and the stream rising. The rude structure trembled violently under the hoofs of his horse, and he felt sure that if the stream rose much higher during the night, the bridge would be gone by morning. He reached home about dusk, and could not help noticing the unusual stillness which prevailed on the plantation, and especially in the negro quarters. Upon arriving at the house, he was met at the door by an old negro woman who had been his nurse or "mammy," as these favored personages are called in the South.

"Give me de horse, Marse Richard," she said, hastily, as he dismounted. "I'll put him up."

"Never mind, mammy," he replied. "I'll tie h'm here till I can send one of the boys for him."

He tied the horse to the rack, and entered the house. Pausing at the door and glancing around, he saw the old woman leading the horse away, though not in the direction of the stables. He was surprised at this, but, as Aunt Nancy was a privileged character, he supposed she was merely carrying out some notion, and took no further notice

of her. His surprise was increased when he found that his wife was not at home. In reply to his inquiries, the butler, an old family servant, informed him that Mrs. Hastings had received news, late in the afternoon, of the dangerous illness of her mother, and had gone to Richmond in the carriage, taking the baby with her. The man's story was plain and straightforward, but he spoke with a reserve that was so utterly foreign to him, that his master's suspicions were aroused. Something, he knew not what, urged Mr. Hastings to guard himself against danger. Turning quietly to the butler, he said:

"George, bring me my pistol case from the library. You know where to find it."

The man disappeared, and in a few minutes returned, bringing the case. Mr. Hastings unlocked it, and an exclamation of astonishment escaped him. The weapons were gone. The butler was unable to tell him what had become of them. Directing the man to order tea immediately, Mr. Hastings walked out on the lawn before the house. A vague and terrible dread had come over him, and he could not shake it off. He was positive that something terrible was about to occur, though he could not tell, and almost feared to conjecture, what it was. After a few moments of reflection, he made up his mind to return to Richmond immediately after supper, and see if his wife had indeed gone there. This he resolved to do quietly, without letting any one on the plantation know his intention; and in order that he might lose no time, he now went to the stable for the purpose of saddling his horse.

As he swung open the great door of the stable, which always contained a stud of horses worthy of being owned by a prince, he paused, and glanced in cautiously. The faint twilight was barely sufficient to enable him to discern the condition of the interior of the building; but, as he discovered it, he staggered back, and a low cry of horror broke from his lips. The horses were all gone, and the stable was entirely empty. He trembled like a child. It was plain to him that something dreadful had already occurred, or was about to befall him, though he did not know what it was. So secure did he feel in his relations with his slaves, that he did not suspect them of the course they were pursuing.

After a moment's hesitation he returned

to the house. The moon was now rising, and the night had fairly settled over everything. His first impulse was to refuse his supper, but he thought it best to seem perfectly at his ease, and unsuspicious, until he could learn what was the matter. During the meal Aunt Nancy came into the room, and stood by the window which commanded a view of the swamp, but remained silent and thoughtful. The butler watched her quietly but vigilantly. Once, however, when he had to leave the room for some purpose, she turned to her master and said, quickly:

"Marse Richard, when you'se done eatin' go up stairs to Miss Julia's room. I'se got somethin' to say to you. Don't let on about it down here."

The butler returned at this moment, and Mr. Hastings made no reply. At the conclusion of the meal he said to the butler, in order to lull whatever suspicions that individual might have:

"George, tell Jim to have my horse ready at six o'clock in the morning. I'm going to town to breakfast."

The flash of triumph which swept over the negro's face at these words did not escape his master, and the latter felt his blood run cold. He left the dining-room and proceeded straight to his wife's chamber. In a few minutes Aunt Nancy made her appearance. The old woman's face had that sickly grayish hue which in the negro always betokens extreme alarm or mental agitation. She came in rapidly, and closed the door softly behind her.

"O Marse Richard," she exclaimed, in a low tone, "it's awful! De Lord knows how it will end."

"What is it, mammy?" he asked, excitedly. "But stop. Where's my wife?"

"Miss Julia, she's safe," replied Aunt Nancy. "I dun sent her to Richmond, whar her folks'll keep her all night. De Master knows I hope dey will."

"Now tell me what is the matter, mammy? Speak quick!"

"De niggers is agwine to rise."

Mr. Hastings sprang from his chair, but the old woman placed her hand on his shoulder and pressed him down again.

"You are dreaming, mammy," he replied.

"Wish I was, honey; but I aint. De niggers is agwine to rise to-night, and dey's agatherin' in de swamp now. Don't make no fuss, 'cause we's got to be quick."

"How many of them are there?"

"Sights on 'em. Heap more'n I know, maybe. Black Gabriel* he's at the head on 'em, an' dey's dun gone crazy. Dey's agwine to kill all de white folks, an' den dey's to burn Richmond, an' den dey'll be free."

"Poor foolish things!" said Mr. Hastings; "they will be the greatest sufferers."

"Dat's what I told 'em," exclaimed Aunt Nancy; "but dey wouldn't listen to me. Dey's agwine to kill you fust, Marse Richard; an' dey told me dey ud murder me if I said anything to you. But I say, let 'em kill me. I'se bound to gib my baby dat I nursed a chance to get away."

"God bless you, mammy," said her master, with emotion. "Your warning comes too late, I fear. My pistols have been taken, and every horse is gone from the stable."

"Ki-yah!" laughed the old woman. "I knowed you wasn't sich a fool as dey took you for. I'se been up to 'em, too, Marse Richard." As she spoke she drew the missing pistols from her bosom, and handed them to the young man, who received them in astonishment. "I was 'feered George might take 'em, and I thought you'd want 'em, so I put 'em out of his way. Mighty smart for an old ooman, wasn't it, honey?"

"I must be off, Aunt Nancy," said her master, hurriedly. "Every moment is of importance. I may escape by making my way through the woods. But," he added, suddenly, "my disappearance will throw suspicion upon you, and they will murder you. What will you do?"

"Never mind dat, honey," she replied, with a chuckle. "You jist git out de house, an' jine me on de lawn by de summer-house. I'll fix all dat."

She left the room, and the young man prepared to follow her, taking care to leave the lights still burning, and to do nothing that might attract attention, or arouse the suspicion of the blacks. Leaving the house by a side door, which could not be seen from the direction of the swamp, he made his way towards the summer-house. The atmosphere was damp and murky, and the light of the moon was obscured by slight clouds. This was fortunate for him, as it would enable him to conceal his move-

* This affair is known in the locality in which it occurred as "Gabriel's Insurrection," or "Gabriel's War."

ments better than he could have done if the moonlight had been brighter. Upon reaching the summer-house he found Aunt Nancy waiting for him.

"Now, Marse Richard," she said, "you jist follow me, an' don't make no noise."

Together they crossed the lawn, and hastened towards a clump of trees near the road leading to the farm gate. As they reached it a negro man stepped before them.

"Is that you, George?" the negro asked, in a low tone.

For answer Mr. Hastings brought the butt end of his heavy pistol down upon the man's head, and he fell heavily to the ground. Immediately the old woman seized him and dragged him into the shade of the trees.

"We must be quick," she whispered. "That was Gabriel's brother."

A few yards back from the edge of the woods two horses were tied. Mr. Hastings recognized one of them as the animal he had ridden from the city that afternoon, and the other as his wife's riding-horse.

"Now I know why you took my horse this evening," he said. "You have shown great prudence and skill, mammy."

"De old ooman's a match for 'em, any day," she muttered, with a chuckle. "Better be quick," she added. "Aint got no time to lose."

They untied the horses and mounted. Keeping close to the shadow of the woods, they moved slowly towards the farm gate, which was about a quarter of a mile distant from their starting-place. They reached it at last. As he tried to shut it softly, it slipped from Mr. Hastings's hand, and closed with a loud clang. Immediately the fugitives set off at a rapid pace for the main road. To reach it they had nearly three miles to travel through the woods, and they knew not how many negroes might lie concealed along their pathway.

Aunt Nancy had spoken the truth. The negroes of the neighborhood, to the number of several hundred, had combined, under the leadership of a slave named Gabriel, and had determined to make an effort for their freedom. In their ignorance, and believing it the best way to accomplish their object, they had determined upon an indiscriminate massacre of the whites. Richmond was to be surprised and utterly destroyed. It was a terrible, horrible programme upon which they had resolved, and it would have been carried out with savage

cruelty. Gabriel, the leader of the insurrection, was a remarkable man. He had passed his life as a favorite servant of a planter whose estate joined that of Mr. Hastings. He was there noted chiefly for his modest and unassuming character and deportment. No one would have believed him capable of organizing and directing so well-laid a conspiracy. Yet he had planned and carried out the whole affair, and now he seemed on the eve of success, for neither the capital nor the surrounding country had received the slightest intimation of the affair.

In the meantime Mr. Hastings and Aunt Nancy had ridden rapidly. They had passed over half the distance that lay between the farm and the turnpike, when the former heard the ring of horses' hoofs behind them. He listened intently, and heard the sound again, more distinctly than before.

"They have discovered our escape, mammy, and are coming after us," he muttered.

"Let 'em come," said the old woman, coolly. "'Spec' I kin ride, too."

In truth, she was an expert horsewoman, in spite of her age, for that accomplishment is natural to her race. She urged her horse to greater speed, while her master did the same, and the two seemed to fly through the darkness and the forest.

The ring of hoofs behind them grew nearer and more distinct. It was evident that their pursuers were numerous and well mounted. Faster yet the fugitives sped along, and at last swept into the main road. As they did so the moon broke from behind a bank of clouds, and shone down full upon them. Half a mile more, and Mr. Hastings turned in his saddle, to see how far his enemies were behind. In the clear moonlight he beheld a band of twenty or thirty mounted men turning into the highway. They saw him at the same moment, and he heard them cheer. The clatter of their horses' feet on the hard ground grew louder. He urged his horse forward, and gave that of his companion a sharp cut with his riding-whip.

The fate of the fugitives was now to be decided by the speed of their horses. There was a broad straight road to Richmond before them, and the bright moonlight showed everything with the clearness of day. Mr. Hastings knew that his pursuers were well mounted, for their horses had been taken from his stables and from those of the neigh-

boring planters. His own steed had been fatigued by the ride from the city late in the afternoon, but that which bore Aunt Nancy was fresh and vigorous. The road seemed to fly under their rapid feet, and the fire gleamed in long flashes, as the heavy shoes struck it from the stones in the turnpike. The way had never seemed so long to the young man before. He watched impatiently the familiar objects, and counted the distance over and over again. He longed to stop at some of the farmhouses on his route, and warn the inmates of their danger, but his own peril was too great. He must push on for the city, and give the alarm there, if indeed he could reach it in time.

On they sped, pursuer and pursued. The brook was only one mile distant now. Soon the fugitives would gain the crest of the hill from which it would be in sight. They reached it at last.

A sharp rifle-crack startled the young planter, and in an instant Aunt Nancy's horse staggered and fell. Mr. Hastings was riding close by the old woman at the time, and as he saw her horse stumble, he reached out his arm, and by a powerful effort, seized her, and swung her up in front of him. It was a heavy load for the already tired animal, but it was nobly carried. The negroes saw the horse fall, and uttered a shout. They did not see the transfer of the old woman to the other steed, and felt confident that they had brought down one of their intended victims.

Mr. Hastings had now reached the brow of the hill which made the boundary of the Brook Valley, and, with the speed of the wind, he thundered down the long slope, and across the level stretch that lay between him and the stream. His pursuers gained on him rapidly, and by the time he was within a quarter of a mile of the water, they were descending the hill. They came on with loud shouts, and above them all rose the voice of Gabriel, commanding the young man to halt, or they would shoot him. A couple of shots whizzed by him, but he paid no attention to them. He could hear the waters of the brook rushing along with a hoarse heavy sound, and he knew from the noise that they had risen very high since he

crossed the stream a few hours before. He kept his eyes strained upon the point where the bridge usually stood, hoping to find it there still, yet dreading that the stream had swept it away. A moment more, and the stream was full in sight, flashing splendidly in the bright light. He looked at it eagerly, then uttered a groan. The bridge was gone, and the stream was too deep to be forded.

The negroes saw this, too, and they broke into shouts of savage laughter. But their merriment died out in astonishment, as they saw the young planter plunge boldly into the raging current, and urge his horse towards the other shore. The noble animal seemed to feel the urgency of the occasion, and struggled bravely. For some moments the issue seemed doubtful, but at length the horse and its riders appeared on the opposite bank, and were soon lost in the trees that shaded the road.

The negroes halted on the edge of the torrent. In vain Gabriel urged them to plunge in and follow the fugitives still further. Their superstitious fear of the stream, which was heightened by the scene they had just witnessed, caused them to hold back, and the black leader was compelled to return to his followers in the swamp.

Mr. Hastings, finding that he was not pursued, stopped at the nearest farmhouse, where he left Aunt Nancy, whose violent exercise had completely exhausted her. Informing the inmates of what was transpiring across the brook, he procured a fresh horse, and hastened on to Richmond, and gave the alarm. The cavalry and armed force were instantly summoned, and as soon as the waters of the brook had subsided, hastened to the neighborhood of the swamp, where they found that Gabriel's men had disbanded, upon ascertaining the hopelessness of their undertaking. Quiet and order were restored, and the people soon forgot the terrible dangers from which they had been so miraculously saved by the rising of the brook.

Mr. Hastings found his wife and child safe in the city. Until the day of her death, Aunt Nancy was the recipient of constant testimonials of their warm affection for her.

GRACIE'S STORY.

BY ADA L. FLETCHER.

YOU see I had just made up my mind not to go to the seaside another summer with Aunt Eleanor and the girls; because all the time that dear good papa of mine thought I was being taken such splendid care of, I was being sent out on the beach to play with all sorts of children, and hustled off to bed at night just as the band began to play down stairs, just as if I was not almost ten years old! Here at home they are all very careful to stand out of the way when Gracie wants anything, but I tell you, away from home it is Gracie who must stand out of the way. And the way Aunt Eleanor does sail round! Just as if I didn't know all the time that if it wasn't for papa she and the girls would have no home and no money, either.

Bessie Brenton was telling me at school one day what a nice time she had at her grandma's the summer before, and it made me just provoked to think what an awful dull time I had, and I got to studying after the bell rang whether I had a grandma or

not. I declare, I didn't know! I knew I must have had one once, but I didn't know whether she had gone away as mamma did or not. I determined to ask papa that very night. I was thinking so much about this, that I actually lost my place in the spelling-class. But Madame only smiled and said, "Better luck next time, Gracie." She always smiles, even when she is angry. I suppose it is because she has such pretty white teeth.

I ran home in a minute, and ran right against Blanche in the hall. She didn't dare scold, because the library door was open, and papa always sits there. But O, didn't she frown, though! I didn't care, for I was in a hurry to ask papa. He was sitting with his back to the door, and I slipped up behind him and put my hands over his eyes, before he knew I was there. He always pretends like he don't know who it is when I do that way, and makes all sorts of speeches to make me laugh; but this time he put one arm round me and drew me

up close to him, and kissed me a great many times; and when his cheek touched mine it was wet, as though he had been crying. But such a thing is not possible, you know! *Men* never cry. Papa loves me, I know, for I am all he has to love, and nobody knows how I love him; but I never knew him to do this way before. I was so puzzled over this that I quite forgot what I wanted to ask him, until he asked me what I wanted, in such a hurry. He heard me run in, I guess. Then I asked him if I had a grandma. He didn't speak for a moment, and when I looked up there actually were tears in his eyes. I saw them myself.

"Why do you want to know, Gracie?"

Then I got to thinking how lonely it was not to have any *mamma* nor *grandma*, nor sisters or brothers, and I couldn't keep from crying myself. He lifted me up on his knees and laid my head on his shoulder.

"Don't cry, papa's darling," he said. "How did you happen to think of this just now?"

Then I told him what a hateful time I always had at the seaside (I didn't tell him how Aunt Eleanor and the girls treated me, for I'd scorn to be a telltale), and all about Bessie Brenton and her grandma, and her grandma's pigs and chickens, and the pony that would let Bessie ride it; and by the time I had finished, I was laughing, and so was he. Then he lifted up a letter that lay on the floor beside him.

"See here, Gracie," he said. "Here is a letter I got to-day from your very own grandma—your own *mamma's* mother—and don't you think she says she wants a certain little girl we know of, whom she has not seen since she was two years old, to come and spend the summer with her out on the farm. What do you think about it?"

I guess he found out what I thought about it, for I almost hugged him to death, and then waltzed round the room like a crazy girl. You don't know how good I felt, unless when you were a little girl you hadn't any *mamma*, and was just to hear for the first time that you had a grandma who lived in the country on a farm. When I got quieted down a little papa took me in his arms again, and told me all about it. How, when I was just two years old, God took my dear *mamma* from us to heaven, and grandma wanted then to take me home with her and keep me; but papa couldn't give me up. "You were all I had, Gracie,

and I believe I should have died with loneliness if my little sunbeam had been taken from me. It was impossible that I should go, so, much against her will, your grandma left you with me. I have intended to take you there every summer, Gracie, but your aunt always insisted on your going with her; and, to tell you the truth, little girl, your papa is a selfish fellow, and didn't want you to love anybody else but him."

Then I patted him on the cheeks—my dear handsome papa!—and told him I never should love any one better than I loved him; and then he laughed and said:

"Well, if you'll promise that, Gracie, you shall go this very summer."

I never was so happy in my life. Mrs. Ellis, Aunt Eleanor's visitor, asked me when we went into the dining-room what made my eyes so bright, but papa and I only smiled at each other, and papa told her they were like other eyes he knew of—naturally bright; and that made her blush and smile, and toss her head until I looked for that long curl she pins on at the side to fall into the gravy bowl!

It did catch in the rosebush once when we were walking in the garden, and it pulled clear off; but papa was looking straight ahead, and didn't see her slip it into her pocket. I did, though, and laughed. I don't like that woman, and I believe she knows it. She is pretty, and dresses stylishly, Blanche says; but I don't like anybody to be forever telling me I am so sweet—so pretty—and then look up at my papa and blush.

Well, you may guess there was no end of a hubbub when papa told Aunt Eleanor where I was going for the summer. But he stopped her pretty quick when she turned up her nose and said, "Among *those* people, Arthur? I am astonished."

"They are her mother's people, Eleanor," he said. "And I have no doubt it would have been better for her if she had been with them all the time. This need make no difference in your plans for the summer. You will go, of course, wherever you choose."

That was all they cared for, I think, for they didn't say any more. Indeed, I heard Blanche tell Amy she was "glad that tiresome child wasn't going with them." I'll bet she wasn't any gladder than I was! Papa would scold me if he should see that last line!—but grammar is so tiresome!

I told Bessie about my plans next morning, and she was just as glad as I was. We didn't study our lessons all the morning, for wondering if my grandma had pigs and chickens, and a pony. Papa said it was of no use waiting until school was out, for he knew I would do no good with books after that. So the very next week after that we started. It was a long ways from New York—way up in Vermont; but I didn't get tired a bit, because I had papa to talk to. Usually, when I went on the cars I was chucked away in the corner furthest from the window, and nobody spoke to me all the way, unless it was to scold me when I slipped off the seat, or went to sleep and pushed the handboxes over with my feet. But now papa gave me the window seat, and he looked over my head and told me about everything. And he let me go across the car and carry a piece of candy to a baby, and hold him in my arms a little while. Once, too, we got off at a little station where our train waited for another train to pass it, and we walked up the platform and looked at the engine, and he explained it to me. I hardly knew before how it was we got over the ground so fast. Altogether, I had just about the nicest time in the world! But O, I was so sleepy when we got there! We went a little ways in a great wagon—I never saw such a wagon!—and then I just can remember being lifted out into somebody's arms, and somebody trying to kiss my eyes open, they said; and when they were open I saw just the sweetest face I ever saw in my life, and papa told me that was Aunt Faith. I didn't look at her very long then, for just behind her I saw an old lady—the dearest old lady, with a white handkerchief pinned over her head, and one pinned round her neck; and I just knew it was my grandma, and ran straight in her arms! Then such kissing and crying as there was! They had supper then, but I don't remember much about it, for I was too tired and excited to eat any, and it was not long until Aunt Faith took me off to bed. It seemed so strange to have an aunt who loved me and kissed me, that I went to sleep right away and dreamed about it.

The next morning I was awakened by the queerest thing. A bird came and sat on a tree right by my window, and sang the sweetest song I ever heard. I was up in a minute, but I scared him and he flew away. I learned better than that, for he waked me

every morning while I stayed at Elmwood Farm. This little room was mother's and Aunt Faith's, when they were little girls, grandma told me, while I was dressing, and a bird used to wake them. I seemed to know more about mamma in just that five minutes that grandma talked than I ever had known before.

Then I heard some one calling me under the window, and there was papa and another gentleman, and a little black pony! You ought to have seen me get down those stairs! I rode around the yard once before I said two words to anybody, papa holding me on; and then I was introduced to the gentleman as Uncle Tom. He said he kissed me in my sleep the night before. But my Aunt Faith! I just couldn't keep my eyes off of her when she went in to breakfast. I never saw anything prettier than my Aunt Faith, and I knew papa thought so, too, from the way he looked at her. I could tell there was no paint or powder about her face, for the rose color came and went in her cheeks, and the blue veins were as plain on her temples. Then she had very brown hair that looks like it wanted to curl all the time, and eyes—papa said they were just like Gracie's eyes, but I know mine are not half so pretty. There was a woman who cooked for them came in and sat down at the table with them. Her name was Nancy. I liked her, too. There was nothing about the place I didn't like. After breakfast I went with grandma to feed the chickens. I never saw any chickens before except at market. I took some of these up in my apron. Little downy things! Then I went with Uncle Tom to feed the pigs, but they scared me. I didn't see what Bessie saw to like about them, until Uncle Tom brought a little white one in his arms and gave it to me. It was no larger than a white rabbit, and just as clean. He said it had no mother, and I might have it for a pet; so I took it to the house. Papa laughed at me, but Aunt Faith said she would help me to take care of it.

Grandma took me up in her lap and looked at me, to see, she said, who I looked like; and papa said I looked more like Faith than anybody, and she said she considered that a great compliment; but he said he meant the compliment for me. Wasn't I a happy girl? I forgot there was an Aunt Eleanor in the world. She is only

papa's half-sister, anyway. Papa stayed two weeks, and he only intended to stay two days. He and Uncle Tom went hunting every day, and then we went to walk in the afternoon. That is, sometimes I went, and sometimes I didn't; for there were the chickens to tend to, you know, and my pig got to following me after a while every where I went, which wasn't very pleasant for the others, though I liked it. Then Uncle Tom and I took a ride every evening after supper. At first I rode and Uncle Tom walked and led the pony, but after a while he rode his own horse, and I rode mine. I had so much to tell grandma, too, and she had so much to tell me, that I never got lonesome one minute. I don't think papa missed me on these walks, for he always said he had "a beautiful time," when I asked him; and I know Aunt Faith enjoyed them, for she enjoys everything. Her birthday came while papa was there—the very day before he started. I couldn't believe she was twenty-five until grandma told me so. My mamma would have been twenty-eight this summer, and papa is almost thirty-five. I wonder if I will live to be so old! But only think! grandma is sixty-three next Christmas! But her heart is young yet, so it doesn't matter. On Aunt Faith's birthday, in the evening, just as I was coaxing piggy into his box, papa called me out on the porch where he and Aunt Faith were sitting together. I went in a minute, for I don't wait when papa calls, and of course the pig went, too—(I don't know what made Uncle Tom laugh at me about that pig, I'm sure!) Papa laughed when he saw me, but he put his arm around me, and said:

"Gracie, have you given Aunt Faith a birthday present yet?"

"I gave her a kiss," I said; "all I had to give."

"I declare, I never thought of that," he said; "or I might have done the same."

Aunt Faith blushed then—a real blush. She didn't have to hold her breath, like Mrs. Ellis did. Then papa went on:

"But I have a present for her I want you give her for both of us. Put this ring on her finger, Gracie, and tell her we both love her, and want her to wear it."

It was a real heavy ring, like the one Blanche wears on her first finger, and it slipped on real easy, but Aunt Faith blushed all the time. Then I put one arm round

her neck and one arm round his, and kissed them both, and went back in the house, with that troublesome pig right after me. Of course I had to take him out again, and when I passed the porch papa was holding the hand that had the ring on it close to his face. It was growing dark, and I guess he had to hold it that way to look at it. He went away early next morning, and I could hardly keep from crying. I didn't want to go back with him, but I did want him to stay there with us. The last thing he said was:

"Don't love Aunt Faith better than you do me, Gracie."

And before I could say a word, Uncle Tom said:

"You'd better be jealous of the pig, Arthur! There's more danger there!"

That made us all laugh, so the parting was very cheerful, after all. Papa promised to write every week, and was real good to keep his promise. Every week Aunt Faith gave me a little envelop all sealed and directed, but it never had any postmark or postage stamp on it. I supposed it came in a large envelop directed to her, for fear it would get lost on the way.

Such a summer as that was! I enjoyed every breath of it. There were no little girls in five miles of us, so grandma said Aunt Faith would have to be a little girl and play with me, and she was just as much of a romp as I was. We walked, and rode horseback, and in the wagon, on the hay. We had picnics all by ourselves in the woods, and every Sunday we went to preaching—grandma, and Uncle Tom, and Nancy in the wagon, and Aunt Faith and I on our ponies, through the leafy roads. And Aunt Faith told me so much about God and our Saviour. Of course I knew it all before, but it always seemed something that I had nothing to do with. Aunt Faith made it so plain to me that he was my Saviour—that God was my Father. The people were old-fashioned in their dress, and the church didn't look like our church in the city; but I had a seat always right by the window, and the scent of the woods and the hay came in all the time, and made me think how good our Father is to make the earth so beautiful; and I never felt like a prisoner shut up in a box, and wished the other prisoner in that other box would hurry and get through, like I used to in the church at home. There was Sabbath school

in the afternoons, after we had eaten our dinners under a tree, and Aunt Faith taught a class of little girls just my age. I never was tired a minute. In the evenings at home Uncle Tom and Aunt Faith, and even grandma, would sing hymns, until I would go to sleep and dream I was in heaven listening to the angels. Then Uncle Tom would wake me with a kiss, and when I looked at Aunt Faith, with the moonlight on her face, I wasn't so certain about the angels, after all!

So the summer went on, and my cheeks grew so rosy papa could no longer call me his "brown-eyed Lily," as he did once last winter; and it grew almost time for me to return to city and books. Then in one of papa's letters came a piece of news that astounded me. "You will be surprised, Gracie," papa wrote, "to learn that your Cousin Blanche is married, and your Aunt Eleanor and Amy have sailed with her to Europe. I don't know what hastened the wedding, unless it was my telling your aunt that I had engaged a new housekeeper. Who do you suppose it is, kitten? How would you like your old friend Mrs. Ellis in that position?"

I can never tell how I felt when I read that letter. I had often thought of papa's marrying again, because he was still young and very handsome, and considered very wealthy; and I could see how many nets were spread for him, and knew when one of the belles of Aunt Eleanor's *elique* condescended to kiss or pet me, just what it meant. Then, too, the older girls at school had often teasingly called Mrs. Ellis my "pretty step-mamma," but until I read this letter I never imagined that he could give my mamma's place to such a woman as that! I just thought my heart would break! I didn't say a word—just dropped the letter for Aunt Faith to read, and went out of the house, I didn't much care where.

I had a good cry out under the elms, and came back a little comforted, having thought how fond papa was of teasing me, and intending to believe this a joke until I saw him. As I passed through the hall I heard grandma saying, "Arthur does wrong to tease the child so. You ought to tell her, Faith. Making such a secret of it may prejudice her mind against it."

"I can't, mother," said Aunt Faith; "Arthur told me to do it, but I can't."

What on earth could it be? I hesitated no longer, but walked straight into the room.

My eyes must have asked the question, for Aunt Faith caught me in her arms and kissed me, and left me alone with grandma, who drew me to her knee. I was trembling all over—I declare, I could hear my own heart beating—but grandma's touch on my head soon soothed me.

"Gracie," she said, "did you ever think of your papa marrying again, and how you would like a new mamma?"

I could only nod my head, I couldn't speak.

"Well, Gracie dear, papa loves his little girl, but still he can't help feeling lonely. He loved your mother, dear, just as dearly as possible, but it has been eight years since she left him, and he knows that, in heaven herself, she does not wish him to be desolate and unhappy, nor her child to grow up without a mother's care. Gracie, if your father were to choose some one whom your mother loved, and whom you love very dearly, to be your mother and his wife, don't you think you would be happier?"

Then the truth—the dear blessed truth—came to me.

"Aunt Faith! Aunt Faith!" I cried, with both arms round grandma's neck. "Aunt Faith will be my mamma!"

Her own voice was choked then, and her eyes full of tears, but she pointed towards the elms, where I knew auntie was, and off I went. Papa used to say I had wings to my feet, and I do believe I had then. It wasn't five minutes until I was in her lap, with her arms round me, and we were both laughing and crying together. Goosie that I was not to have seen it all before! But we played off on papa good. When he came, the next week, his first question was:

"How do you think you will like my new housekeeper, rosebud?"

Then I answered, saucier than I ever spoke to papa before, before the whole roomfull, "You may have Mrs. Ellis for housekeeper, if you want her, papa, but I am going to have Aunt Faith for my mamma."

Who do you suppose was surprised then? They were married that evening, and papa caught us both in his arms in the porch, afterward, and said:

"Having Grace and Faith both, ought I not to be a better, happier man?"

And this was just the happiest summer of my life. Aunt Faith—I mean mamma—says we will go to the farm every summer; and Uncle Tom says my pig never shall be killed, but shall live to a happy old age.

HARBINGERS OF WAR.

BY REV. DR. H. STANDISH.

WE shall seldom find an instance of a more thoroughly robust credulity than that which can be proved to exist in Germany with respect to a legend that dates from the time of the Crusades.

Not very far from Darmstadt are two ruined castles, of which one, called Rodenstein, perched on an eminence of moderate height, looks formidable enough with its array of ivy, wild roses, and so on; whereas the other, called Schnellert, is almost ruined out of visible existence. Now, some seven hundred years ago, when both these edifices were in sound condition, the latter was occupied by Weiprecht von Schnellert, a young knight of proclivities so wild that he was known in the neighborhood as Mad Wipert, while he had a counterpart in Hans von Rodenstein, another knight, who dwelt in the castle below. Richly endowed with vices of every description, with the exception of those failings that lean to virtue's side, and very properly detested by all who knew them, these two brutal specimens of mediæval chivalry were devotedly attached to each other, and, whether engaged in business or pleasure, they were rarely seen

apart. Their business chiefly consisted in highway robbery, practised on travellers between Heidelberg and Frankfort; and their favorite amusement, when they had nothing more profitable to occupy their time, was to hit upon devices that would make the lives of their serfs as wretched as possible. Living near the Odenwald, they naturally hunted much, and as the forest was largely stocked with game, they invariably had good sport. But not a scrap was bestowed upon the vassals, who were pining in wretched mud cottages, with vestments to correspond. All they had was a contingent remainder on what the lords' hounds found themselves unable to eat. That he might not, in a weak moment, be lured into the performance of a charitable action, Mad Wipert, whenever the results of his sport exceeded the immediate wants of his household, adopted the expedient of cutting off part of the feet of the animals that came within his clutches, and then letting them go. The sight of the poor animals limping off in this helpless condition was, in the opinion of Wipert, the finest spectacle in the world, and he had a hearty sympathizer in Hans.

People like those who, in the nineteenth century, are trying to put down vivisection, were rare in the middle ages. Nevertheless, it occurred to an old monk, named Justin, that the elaborate torture inflicted by Wipert on defenceless animals was not altogether right, and when the knight, after an exploit of exceptional barbarity, came to confess, he not only refused to give him absolution, but, being threatened with violence, administered a curse instead. "It is an ill wind that blows nobody good," and the imprecation proved beneficial to a good strong stag, captured by the knightly sportsman. Wipert resolved to torture not the animal but the monk, and having shod the former like a horse, bound the latter upon its back, and turned it adrift with a pack of hounds behind. The precursor of Mazeppa, less fortunate than the Cossack, was soon scratched to death by the thorny bushes through which he was forced to pass; and the sport, which had afforded infinite delight to Wipert and his retainers, came to a sudden stop when the stag, harassed by the hounds, pitched with its lifeless burden into a deep hollow.

Everybody, probably, has a conscience, if one could only find it out, and the death of the monk Justin was followed by a visible change in the manners of Wipert. For the spiritual thunders of the Bishop of Wurzburg, the nearest ecclesiastical authority, he did not care much; but when the figure of the monk, scratched and bleeding, with a crucifix in the right hand that had no fingers, came every night to his bedside, things began to look serious. The thought struck him that he ought to do some pious act, which might in some measure atone for his previous misdeeds. The second crusade, preached by St. Bernard of Clairvaux, offered him an opportunity of fulfilling his good intentions, and he accordingly joined the banner of the Emperor Conrad the Third, who, jointly with Saint Louis, king of France, was at the head of the expedition, having first settled matters at home by marrying his only sister Mechtilde to his dear friend Von Rodenstein, and appointing the latter heir to his estates in case he should not return.

Years rolled by; Wipert did not come to Germany, but reports did, and they were to the effect that the contrition of the knight had been of the most transient kind, inasmuch as he had embraced the Moham-

medan faith in order to marry a fair Saracen. If the returned pilgrims, who brought the reports, had simply stated that Wipert professed no faith at all, they would have been readily believed, but the statement that he had embraced Islam was beyond the credence even of his worst-used vassal. Nevertheless rumor had, for once in a way, spoken the unadulterated truth, and one fine day Wipert reappeared at Schnellert, accompanied by his Saracen wife. As might have been expected, his first proceeding was to call upon his neighbor at Castle Rodenstein. Here he learned that his sister had died long ago, in consequence of the ill-usage of her husband; but at this intelligence he was neither shocked nor surprised. On the contrary, the alliance between the two friends became stronger than ever. Wipert having already become weary of his Saracen wife, became enamored of a young daughter whom Mechtilde had left behind her; while, on the other hand, the lovely Saracen captivated Hans von Rodenstein. The situation presented no serious difficulty where two such parties as our gallant knights were concerned. Hans consigned his daughter to Wipert, taking in return the Saracen lady as a valuable consideration.

The disreputable state of affairs in the two castles did not at all trouble the vassals; indeed they would have been greatly pleased by the arrangement, if it had caused the knights to remain quietly at home. But quiet was a thing foreign to the nature of Wipert and Hans; and the oppression of vassals, and the robberies on the highways between the Main and the Neckar, went on more merrily than ever. At last the nuisance became so great that the Diet at Frankfort could not overlook it any longer, and the Bishop of Wurzburg undertook to put it down. All the vassals of the bishop and all the knights in the vicinity of the Main were therefore assembled together, under the command of Conrad von Bocksberg, the marshal of the bishopric, who, thus finding himself at the head of a considerable army, took a circuitous route, and, crossing the river at Oberburg, came close to the castles, without creating the slightest suspicion in the minds of their wicked occupants.

When we said that Hans and Wipert had no friends besides each other, we had overlooked a certain Jew of Michelstadt, who, as a kind of mediæval Fagin, was in the habit

of giving the knights ready money for the booty they had taken on the road. He consequently felt for them a business-like affection, and having learned the object of the expedition under Conrad, he hastened to warn the culprits, who were not only his friends but his customers, of the impending peril. So fast did he run, in order to be in advance of the army, that when he had reached the gates of Schnellert and delivered his dismal tidings, he immediately, through sheer exhaustion, fell down dead.

On receiving the poor Jew's information, Wipert at once sent for his friend Hans, and in a foolhardy mood they set about fortifying Schnellert, which was at once knocked to pieces by Conrad. Of the two castles, Rodenstein was the stronger, and thither they fled with their retainers. But though Rodenstein was not demolished like Schnellert, it was soon made too hot to hold its occupants; and the knights, with their two ladies, rushing out into the forest, fell into the very hollow which had received the corpse of the unfortunate monk Justin. There the wretched creatures lay, with their arms and legs broken, but with their heads perfectly unscathed, so that they could fully appreciate the misery of their situation. Their least misfortune was, that their shrieks could not reach the ears of their vassals, for it is very doubtful whether the vassals, if they had been aware of their condition, would have made the slightest effort to improve it.

When they had lain nearly a whole day, parched with thirst and unable to stir, a fearful storm broke out, such as they had never seen before; trees were struck by lightning and fell around them in all directions, rocks were tossed about by the neighboring torrent, which had marvellously swollen, but nothing touched them. In the course of the night the tempest ceased, the hollow became illuminated, and the spectre of the monk Justin stood before the sufferers with a palm-branch in his hand. In a solemn voice he told them that as they had given some signs of contrition in their last hours, mercy would be extended to them; and that, having learned what bodily pain was, they might close their eyes without the fear of incurring punishment in another world. A singular retribution was, however, in store for them. As by their marauding expeditions they had brought discord into peaceful valleys, it should be their

office to appear as the heralds of any war that occurred in Germany to the end of time; their limbs would, on every occasion, be restored to their full vigor, and be animated by their souls; and, with the skeletons of their hounds, the two knights would hunt the animals they had tortured, which would likewise be restored to life, from Schnellert to Rodenstein. When a war approached its termination, they would again be seen returning to Schnellert.

Of the continual fulfilment of the monk's prophecy a record has been kept with reference to nearly every war during the latter half of the last century; and the last authenticated appearance of the Rodenstein hunt bears the very recent date of 1848, when it is said to have been observed about a fortnight before the breaking out of the French Revolution.

The legend given above is the principal one connected with Castle Rodenstein; and there is reason to believe that it is an elaboration of the Wild Hunt, which may be traced back to Odin. Dr. Grasse, an indefatigable investigator, adds to it another story, in which a similar result, with reference to the same place, is obtained in a different way. According to this, Castle Rodenstein was once inhabited by a knight who was the terror of his neighbors, passed all his time in hunting, and never bestowed a thought upon the fair sex. On one occasion the Palatine gave a tournament, to which he invited all the knights resident on the Rhine, the Neckar and the Main. Von Rodenstein made his appearance, looking very magnificent, unhorsed every adversary, and received the prize from the hand of the noble lady Marie von Hochberg, with whom he at once fell desperately in love. She readily became his wife, and for some time they both lived happily together in Castle Rodenstein; when, one unlucky day, the knight became involved in a quarrel with one of his neighbors. He was already somewhat tired of the calm enjoyments of domestic life, and the opportunity of a return to his old habits was by no means unwelcome. In vain did his wife, who undoubtedly thought that matters might be amicably settled, entreat him to abstain from broil and battle; in vain did she fling herself on her knees before him, and implore him, for the sake of herself and her yet unborn child, not to leave the castle. He coldly thrust her aside, and rode off on his courser with

all possible speed. Almost immediately afterward the poor lady gave birth to a child and died; and at night, while the knight lay in ambush near Schnellert, watching for his enemy he saw a white figure approaching him from his own castle. This was the spectre of his wife, who, bearing her child in her arms, reproached him with her death, and told him that he was doomed to wander about as the herald of wars in Germany. Not long afterwards he was mortally wounded in a skirmish, and died in Castle Schnellert, in front of which he has since made his appearance, whenever a war is about to break out. On such occasions there is a great gathering of men and horses, drums and trumpets, and so forth; but a hunt in the air does not pertain to the story. This Rodenstein was, no doubt, a terrible ruffian, but he was certainly more respectable than the other.

There is yet another legend which slightly reflects the first, and is connected with a certain monument in the church at Frankisch-Crumbach, which represents a knight with a lady standing on each side of him. It bears no inscription, but it marks the burial-place of the Rodenstein family. Of the knight, it is said that, during an expedition to Palestine, he married a Greek lady, in the honest belief that the wife whom he had left at home was dead. When he returned, he found he had been mistaken, but no unpleasantness arose. He lived quietly for the rest of his life with his two wives, who loved each other like sisters, and they were all buried in the same grave. The Greek looks something like the Saracen in a new dress; but this pacific knight could scarcely be the same person as the wild companion of Mad Wipert.

HOW I WENT TO RICHMOND:

— OR, —

The Fate of one of Stoneman's Raiders.

BY M. QUAD, OF THE DETROIT FREE PRESS.

I WAS in the service all through the great struggle, and it would be singular if I had not heard of or met with some adventures which can be safely set down as thrilling and exciting, if not extraordinary. The cavalry-man saw and encountered much that did not come in the way of the foot-soldier; and if his adventures were more dangerous and his duties more laborious, it was no reflection on him of the musket. It was simply the force of circumstances.

I don't think there is an acre of road between Washington and Richmond, for a space of thirty miles wide, that I haven't ridden over. For three years, during the bloodiest part of the struggle, our brigade of cavalry, sometimes alone, sometimes consolidated with other brigades, scouted that country day and night, picketing fords,

cross-roads and mountain passes; and it was not boy's work. If there was a week that we did not have a cavalry fight, losing a dozen troopers, we made a long march in commemoration; and if there was a day we did not make at least a five mile scout, we thought surely that a meeting of peace commissioners was being held.

When Stoneman made his famous but ill-directed reconnoissance, our brigade held the head of the marching column. None of us of the rank and file knew exactly what was intended, but could guess pretty straight; and as we were in heavy force, and all fresh mounted, the column was full of enthusiasm, and ready to follow the guidons to the gates of Richmond. I never saw a better mount of men in all my experience, or one that had a better record for hard riding and good fighting.

On the second day out, after we were fairly inside the enemy's lines, and had encountered and scattered several small detachments, the bugles blew "halt," and the column turned into a fine grove by the turnpike road, to take an hour's nooning. We had scarcely unbridled, before we were opened on with a fusillade from the woods, about thirty rods across a field, and in less than fifteen minutes had uncovered and routed a guerrilla gang numbering fifty, and capturing two. About a quarter of a mile back on the road we had passed a small farmhouse on our march; there was no water in the grove, our canteens were empty, and a comrade named Sam Burham and myself determined to return to the house and fill them. We also took along a dozen or more belonging to others, and started away with the belief that we should return long before the column would be ready to march, leaving our horses and arms behind. There was no sign of life about the premises as we approached, and we felt a little uneasy as we sauntered up the long path, not fearing but thinking it curious that neither women nor negroes were to be seen. A field of corn, the stalks growing higher than a man's head, almost completely surrounded the house. Not knowing the whereabouts of the well, and convinced that it would be just as well to ask a favor as to take it by force, Sam and I at length stood upon the low step at the door, and I gave a loud rap, and then another, and another, as no one appeared. "It's no go," said Sam; "they have took to the woods." But, as if to fling back his words, a step was that moment heard descending the hall stairs. It came part way down, stopped, and then a voice sang out "come in." Raising the latch, we stood upon the threshold to meet the face and form of a girl seemingly about fourteen years old, who was standing on the stairs. Before we could utter a word the lass took in our identity and errand, and commenced to warn us with a motion of her hand. As we stood there she came down another step, and whispered, "Go back as soon as you can—the cornfield is full of guerrillas."

Before we could realize her words there was a rush behind, a suppressed shout, and both of us were lying on the grass, the fierce visages of a score of guerrillas glaring down upon us. Our arms had been seized, doubled behind and tied in less than a moment

—in fact, before we had ceased thinking of the girl's warning words. "If you make the least noise, I'll cut your throats as I'd slash a dog's!"

These words were uttered by one who seemed to be the leader of the gang, and he bent down close over us, holding a wicked bowie-knife right before our eyes. And then, after conversing a moment with the gang, in such a low tone that we could not catch the words, the man added:

"Git up and come along with us; and I warn ye agin that if ye open your traps to us, make as much as a chirp, I'll let ye have this cutter clear to the hilt."

Not over five minutes had passed since we gave the first rap at the door, and events had succeeded each other so rapidly that we had not had time to thoroughly comprehend what had passed. We rolled over on the grass, got to our feet with considerable difficulty, and with a guerrilla on each side, carrying a naked knife ready for use, we started off through the corn toward the rear of the house. After ten minutes' watch we brought up at a log stable, into which we were rudely flung, warned again to keep quiet, and the gang departed, leaving three of their number to guard the doorway.

"Well, Sam?" I inquired, as we walked to the far corner of the hut. "Well, Charles?" he inquired in return; and both of us gave each other a long puzzled look.

Captured we were—no doubt of that, and by the very worst foes that a soldier ever encountered. But our forces were so near, and in such round numbers, that we were inclined to treat the whole affair as a trick which would shortly end in our release and the punishment of our audacious captors. We could hear the shouts of our men, the neighing of the horses, and it was hard to realize that we were captives there within shouting distance of several thousand comrades. "They'll soon miss us and make a search," whispered Sam. And we both waited to hear the bugle blow "boots and saddles," knowing that our absence would be seen as soon as the troopers rode into line for the marches. At length the signal came, sounding shrill and clear, and caused a stir among the guards at the door, one of whom looked in and grinned in a malicious and triumphant way. If we were missed, and we must be, some of the men would remember our errand, and doubtless ride back to the house to hurry us up; and we stood

and waited for the event. We plainly heard the clanking of spurs and sabres as the troopers rode into line, and for the first time began to feel a bit uneasy. In a few moments more the whole gang of guerrillas came running through the corn into the hut, having an air of excitement, and the door was immediately barricaded with logs and boards, and the fellows unslung the carbines which had hitherto been carried over the shoulder by the strap, and then stood waiting and listening. Sam and I were immediately convinced that our comrades were searching for us, but how were we to give them a clue? In a moment more we heard voices, and then the tramp of horses through the corn. Sam and I were comparatively alone in our corner, and had just planned to raise a loud yell, when two of our captors came up, flung us down, kneeled over us with their naked knives held in the air, and muttered in whispers:

"Jest one move of your tongue, and the knives go to your hearts!"

It was easy to read a face during those days of murder and bloodshed, and a child would have seen the folly and danger of disobeying that command. A shout might bring help, but it would be too late to avail us. Meanwhile the troopers rode to and fro through the corn, shouting our names, and two of them at length halted near the hut.

"Mighty curious, Tom," remarked one of them.

"Well, it is," replied Tom, who had shared my blanket and the contents of my haversack a hundred times. "They aint the boys as would desert, and they left everything behind; and I shouldn't a-wonder if the cursed guerrillas had nabbed 'em."

And the boys rode away, conversing as they went, and we directly heard the clatter of hoofs on the hard turnpike road. The guerrillas looked down into our faces and smiled, and we knew that we were their prey. Not a movement was made for full ten minutes, and then two or three of the gang softly unbarred the door and stepped out to reconnoitre. They returned in a few moments and reported that the entire command was out of sight and hearing.

"Now, then, we'll give these Yankee whelps a trial!" ejaculated the leader, resuming his old tone of ferocity; and we were conducted out doors. Keeping in the corn all the way, we at length reached the woods behind it, were roughly helped over a fence,

and the sight of a score of horses greeted our eyes. The command was immediately given to mount, and Sam and I were ordered to take a position midway of the column, and we started on a slow walk through the woods, going northward. We marched about a mile, and then debouched in a clearing in the midst of an encampment of thirty or forty tents, over one of which waved a Confederate flag. Our arrival was greeted with shouts of satisfaction and yells of "hang 'em!" And we were immediately conducted to the tent of the called colonel.

As we entered he stood regarding us for a moment, and then, in a voice of extreme passion, hissed:

"Why in — don't you remove your hats!"

There was the best reason in the world—because our arms were yet tied painfully tight behind us, and Sam ventured to explain, using respectful and quiet language.

"You lie, you cursed dog!" yelled the colonel. And he gave Sam a blow on the mouth that sent the hapless lad flat to earth, bleeding from nose and lips. At this juncture one of the men, whom I afterwards heard addressed as "Captain Weathers," interfered, telling the colonel how and when we were captured, and the man did not serve me the same ugly trick, as he seemed intending. My comrade was a young man of high talent, with some of the best blood of the North in his veins, and I think that blow was the first and last one which ever touched him. He was bold and courageous to extremes, and could have had a commission by saying the word. When he was pulled to his feet after that foul blow, and the "captain" had wiped off the blood with a piece of tent-cloth, I saw a glitter in Sam's eyes that fairly made my nerves thrill and quiver. His blue eyes, unusually full of laughter, seemed to have turned blood-red, and there was a quivering about the veins which stood out on his high forehead, that showed how thoroughly that brutal act had touched his sense of manhood.

We were then ordered to sit down on campstools, the colonel and his "staff" ranged in front of us, and they commenced to ply us with questions, asking how many troops Stoneman had, where he was going, the names of the regiments, and so forth. Sam would make no reply whatever, but sat breathing hard and fast; and what infor-

mation I chose to give was not so thoroughly reliable as might have been. At length, seeming to think that all possible information had been secured, a guard was called in, and we were conducted through the camp to another log hovel, but a stout one, ushered in, and a sentry left at the door, with orders to shoot us down if we made a move to escape. Before the captain left he gave orders that our arms should be untied, and spoke a pleasant word or two to Sam, seeking to excuse the conduct of the colonel by saying that he had taken a glass too much. There was a pile of straw in one corner of the hut, and we threw ourselves on to this as soon as our arms were released. Sam said but very little; he agreed that we would be held as prisoners of war, and that it would be Libby or Andersonville at the worst.

"But I shall go no further," he muttered, after a short silence; "I'd give a thousand dollars to revenge that blow."

I tried to smooth it away, and at last, drilled out, we both fell fast asleep, and did not awaken until just at dark, and then on account of voices close to the boys outside. As we listened we heard a voice inquire:

"What are we going to do with the two blue bullies?"

"Why," answered another voice, "I s'pose they'll go to Richmond, though I go for stringing them up to a tree."

The voices continued for some time longer, the speaker concluding that we would not be hung for spies; and then they drew away into the gathering darkness, leaving Sam and me to discuss our chances. We at length resolved to make an effort to escape, and in this idea made a tour of the hut, carefully sounding the logs and corners to find a weak spot. While thus engaged we accidentally displaced a hanging board, and the noise brought the sentry to the door in a moment. Seeing us both on our feet, he fired off his musket in the air, shouted for help, and in ten minutes more the hut was full of excited guerrillas, among whom were the colonel, captain, and several non-commissioned officers. The sentry was questioned as to what he had seen and heard, but I stoutly denied that we had contemplated an escape, saying that I had knocked the board down while seeking the water bucket. Had Sam backed up my assertions, it is probable that the sentry would have been laughed at as being too easily alarmed.

But the sight of the colonel revived all the lad's half-slumbering passions, and he refused to say a word. Noticing this, the colonel stepped forward, gave Sam's ear a cruel twist, and ejaculated:

"Well, why in the d—l don't you help your comrade to excuse it?"

I can't remember just how the parties stood there, only I know that the sentry, with his bayonet fixed to his musket, was at Sam's left hand, and that the brave boy had seized the gun, driven the bayonet clear through the colonel's body up to the very shank, and was fighting his way to the door with encouraging shouts, before I had scarcely seen his ear between the colonel's fingers. The torch which had been brought in was kicked over in an instant, and there was a terrible struggle; shots mingling with oaths and shouts, and then the whole crowd suddenly cleared the door, shouting "kill him! kill him!" The next moment I realized what the rash boy had done, done on the spur of the moment, and I made for the door, falling flat over the dead and bleeding body of the colonel. Scrambling up, I found no one to oppose my egress, but a crowd was shooting and shouting at a struggling object close to a fence at the other end of the encampment.

Perhaps now, when I recall the incident, my conscience would be better satisfied had I rushed down to assist poor Sam in that struggle for life and revenge. But I had not even so much as a knife; there were fifty to one, and I did just what another might have done—turned and fled in the opposite direction. I had not proceeded over ten rods, stumbling over tent-ropes and the uneven ground, when the sounds of the struggle ceased, and I knew that poor Sam was recaptured, either dead or alive. In a moment a feeling came over me that I would not desert him, and that I would know his fate. I rose up and moved on, and after getting outside the camp, turned to the left, and made my way back toward the hut, keeping in the woods whose edges were not twenty rods away. Before I had got opposite I heard the crowd yelling "hang him!" and through the smoky darkness I saw them leading Sam back toward the hut. He did not seem badly wounded, for he moved on with stout steps, and my heart gave a bound of hope that the affair had terminated. But I forgot for a moment the men he had to deal with, and the fact

that he had killed their commanding officer. As I crouched low in the bushes, thinking of these things, the crowd shouted again with rage, and I knew that Sam's fate was sealed—they were looking at the dead body of the colonel. Suddenly they all started towards me, and I thought for a moment that they were on my trail. But I soon saw their objective point, a tree standing within fifty feet of my hiding-place. They had come so near before I had decided to take action, that I was fearful of being observed did I attempt to steal away; and so I laid flat down among the rank grass, and could soon hear every word that passed. Sam maintained silence, but the curses of his captors were awful to hear. Some proposed one thing and some another, but it was at length decided to hang him. It appeared from what I could gather that Sam had fought like a tiger at bay, killing one of the men and wounding several others before he was overpowered. There were half a dozen torches held up to the crowd, and at length, feeling more assured, I ventured to raise my head and take a look. The light from a flaming brand fell full upon him. I saw that his clothing had been nearly all torn off in the struggle, and that his face and hands were fairly red with blood. I saw that he must be badly hurt, though he bore up wonderfully, and I don't think that the knowledge of his fast-approaching fate caused a single nerve to tremble. Poor boy! how I pitied him! And he was so brave and calm, so soldier-like, that my heart bled for his fate. "Rescue!" My heart leaped at the word, but fell again like a lump of lead. We were thirty miles from the Union lines, and I was alone and unarmed. Nothing but a miracle could save the boy. He straightened up a bit, looked around, and then calmly said:

"It was the colonel's fault, not mine; he had no right to abuse a helpless prisoner. But I don't care; I would do the same thing again. I can die like a soldier and a man, and I have only one favor to ask. Up among the pines of Michigan I have a poor old mother, and I hope some one among you will have human heart enough to write her how I died. Now go ahead—hurrah for the old flag!"

I heard a low order given, felt what was coming, and drew down my head to avoid the sight. There was a sound of a falling box, a sort of chilling "thud," and then

all was still. Poor Sam was being hung!

The outside of the circle was within thirty feet of my hiding-place, and I heard the words, "Dies as easy as a baby. Well, he was a brave 'un, he was." After about twenty minutes they cut down the swinging body, covered it with a canvas, and then for the first time seemed to remember that there was or ought to be another prisoner. The crowd surged away to the hut, and I presently heard oaths and shouts of disappointment. However, they seemed to think that I had made good my escape, and did not enter into any search. I remained in my hiding-place until the camp had settled down to quietness, and then started to crawl away. Suddenly the thought came to me to pay Sam's body a last visit, and to secure some relic to return to his old mother. I knew that his dying request would not be observed by his executioners, and after a moment was convinced that the awe and superstition which attaches to the dead, even among soldiers, would keep the guerrillas away from it. Accordingly I crawled silently to the spot, and throwing back the cloth, peered into the face which I had loved so well. It was negro-black, showing that death had resulted from strangulation; the rope was yet about the neck, buried deep in the flesh. Feeling over the body, I found that the poor boy was literally covered with wounds. One of his arms had been broken, he had been struck by two or three bullets, and a slash from a bowie-knife had bared a shoulder blade. He had not surrendered until helpless as an infant. From the pants I took out his tobacco box and a little money, and severing one of his flaxen curls, all dabbled with blood, I carefully covered up the cold body again, and softly crawled back to the woods.

Having no further services to render the dead, I began to consult my chances of escape. I was in the enemy's country, miles and miles from the Union lines, having no more than a general knowledge of the land, unarmed, without food, and I was half a mind to walk back into the camp and surrender myself. However, the thought of Libby deterred me, and I struck boldly out through the woods, walking northwards. I progressed rapidly, and travelled for two hours in fields and woods, without meeting or hearing anything to disturb me. Then, just as I was about to cross a road which ran across my route, I heard a great clatter

of hoofs, and shrank down just as a squadron of Confederate cavalry dashed by. They were gone in a moment, and from thence until daybreak I continued along without interruption. As signs of approaching day were apparent I was crossing a long bit of meadow land, hearing dogs barking at a farmhouse about a hundred rods to the right. As near as I could judge the next few miles ahead were devoid of forest, and it stood me in hand to secrete myself until another night. Smelling fresh cut hay aroused me; I soon found that I was close to a large stack. Just then I heard a horse galloping along the distant road, and the sound of voices at the house, and I saw that I must immediately hide myself. Walking several times around the stack, I at length attacked one side of it, and had soon removed enough hay to allow me space to squeeze in. In fifteen minutes I had worked my length into the stack, covering up the hole by which I entered as well as could. If no one came near the stack, I was safe from discovery; but an observer would not fail to note that some creature had occasioned a disturbance, and a slight investigation would uncover me. However, I had made the best arrangements possible, and must trust the rest to luck. It was fearfully hot in there, and I was soon in a lather of sweat. Without water or food, I had a dismal prospect for the day.

Time wore away until shortly after dinner, and then I heard voices quite close to me, and the sound of horses and wagon. I knew, as well as if seeing, that the farmer and his men were taking up the hay, and now came the trial. In a moment more there was a furious barking of a dog at the orifice, and I was lost. I laid perfectly still, and the beast could just reach the sole of my boot, which he gnawed at with great ferocity.

"What ails the brute?" inquired a voice, coming close up to the stack; and another voice remarked that "he had probably holed a 'possum or woodchuck." The next moment both of the speakers commenced driving their hay forks into the stack, in hopes to strike "the animal." Fortunately for me, the dog kept at the hole, where the loose hay would have let a fork into my body, and after several thrusts the speakers declared that the dog had been deceived, and they soon moved off. The animal, however, kept at me, and at last, feeling revengeful, I managed to give him a kick on the nose that settled his business, and he went away.

How long and how hot that day was! I have since lived months that seemed shorter. But at last the sun went down, the shadows came, and I crawled out more dead than alive, lying for some time on the grass before I was strong enough to move away. Then, taking the stars for my guide, I moved northward, and soon entered the farm orchard. The smell of ripe fruit directed me to a heap on the ground, and I sat down and ate until my jaws could not take another bite; then, still keeping in the fields, and having the light of the stars to guide me, I started off briskly. About midnight, while walking in the road to avoid a swamp, I came near being captured by a cavalry patrol who came from the south, and afterward swam a wide creek, these being the only two adventures of the night, or the only events worth recording, before I was challenged by the Union pickets.

The first act performed after getting inside the lines was to write a long letter to Sam's mother, giving her the full details of his death, and to carry the package of relics to the express office, and the next, set about revenging his death.

IN A VIOLIN.

BY ETTA W. PIERCE.

WANTED.—Information of Agnes Hollingsford, daughter of the late William Hollingsford, or of her heirs. Said Agnes left her father's house eighteen years ago, and is supposed to have married a person of foreign extraction, name unknown. When last heard from she was living abroad. Any information regarding her, or her children, will be liberally rewarded by Messrs. Rowel and Ransom, executors of the late William Hollingsford, New York."

Week after week, month after month, the above notice had stared at Michael Gayle from the columns of all the daily journals, from the office windows of Rowel and Ransom, and then from special advertisements sown broadcast through the great city, like chanceful seeds, some one of which might haply bring forth the fruits of that knowledge for which the legal gentlemen searched and queried and searched in vain. Not that I would have you suppose that a poor young fellow, without money or friends, who rented rooms on Mrs. Pinchin's second floor, and played fourth violin in the orchestra of a theatre, and had a hunchbacked sister to support, and eked out the remainder of their scanty income by a few pupils on the piano, could have aught to do with the high and mighty Hollingsfords. Not he; but their story was very generally known, and Michael was one of the multitude who read the notice of Rowel and Ransom, and, in reading, thought of the wharves and the blocks of warehouses, and the wealth untold of William Hollingsford, and of the hard and cruel man that he had been; and, more than all, of the lost heiress, the sole child of his house, disinherited years before, but forgiven, and remembered, and yearned for at the hour of death, and now a wanderer and an outcast on the face of the earth.

Time passed on, but it brought no tidings of Agnes Hollingsford. The advertisements disappeared from the daily papers. Rowel and Ransom had lost all hope. "She is dead," they said, one to another. Colonel Ross Hollingsford, the last of the name, and heir now to the dead man's estates—he who had been twirling his mustache in suspense for a long time, and weighing the

possibilities of the lost heiress's reappearance, straightway entered into full possession of the wharves and warehouses, the family plate and fast horses, and all else pertaining to said estates; and the world went on its way, forgetting in due time that such a being as Agnes Hollingsford had ever lived.

Meanwhile Michael Gayle was drudging on.

It was late in the autumn, and a good six months after the occupation of William Hollingsford's brown stone front up town—a wretched day, full of spiteful dashes of snow, and a raw sleet that chilled straight to the marrow and bone. There was a fire burning in the little parlor on Mrs. Pinchin's second floor—a pleasant and cosy parlor, in spite of its threadbare carpet and battered old furniture; and Michael Gayle sat at the piano in one corner, with a score of music before him, jotted down in pencil, playing it swiftly through, with a pale absorbed face. Three windows the room had, draped in spotless white—a box of mignonette and a tube-rose growing in one—a black walnut music-rack, against which a violin stood in its case, two or three pictures on the wall in tarnished frames, and Hope's work-basket in a chair by the fire, where Hope herself sat, stitching away at a bit of embroidery, and listening to Michael's music. A slender deformed woman was this sister of Gayle's, hardly taller than a child, although she was his senior, a woman with little transparent hands, and a small, pale face, pinched and sharpened by physical suffering, and beautiful braids of ash and gold hair. Presently Michael rose up from the music-stool and came forward with the score in his hand. Hope dropped her work.

"It is my '*Melodia*,'" he said, drawing his breath quickly.

"O Michael, how beautiful it is!" cried the little woman.

His brow contracted.

"Mademoiselle Sephanie has volunteered to sing it on her benefit night."

"That is kind," said Hope.

"Do you know how it sounds to me?"

he cried, hurriedly—"as some stringed instrument might, with its master chord gone."

"O Michael?"

"Mademoiselle Sephanie would never sing it thus," in passionate disappointment. "This is not the '*Melodia*' I have dreamed of. She has flown from me! Hope, what does it lack?"

"Nothing I am sure! Carry it to the manager to-morrow. No one but yourself could find fault with it."

Michael Gayle returned to the piano and played the score through again, flushed almost breathless. It was of little use. Clearly, it did not please the critical brain, or the passionate throbbing heart. A sweet and perfect thing it seemed indeed, but some divine and subtle essence, unknown to meaner souls, he missed. Hope looked up at him, distressed.

"A flower without perfume!" he said, gloomily, tearing the score in two, and tossing it into the grate.

Her eyes filled with tears.

"I will rewrite it, Hope," he said, smoothing the ash-and-gold hair. "We will have a '*Melodia*' yet; it shall not conquer me."

"But you work so hard, Michael—you are getting so thin!" sobbed Hope. "And it was beautiful."

"Tush!"

He was holding her hands and smiling bravely down at her, when a thundering tattoo resounded at the door. Michael in some concern went to open it.

"If you please, sir," said the voice of Mrs. Pinchin, who stood stark and stiff with indignation at the threshold, "here be a gentleman as wishes to see you, and as wouldn't use the door-mat, but as bolted up the front-stair carpet, and left his tracks the whole way, sir!"

"Confound the woman!" said the gentleman in question, advancing straightway into the room, and slamming the door behind him. A tall aristocratic fellow, arrayed in as much purple and fine linen as the law allows, with a dark haughty face, and a stare, bold almost to insolence. He looked about him—at the room with its humble appointments, at Hope's little deformed figure, and lastly at Gayle. His lip curled.

"You are a teacher of music?" curtly.

"Yes," from Gayle.

"Humph! My name is Hollingsford. You have been recommended to me as such. Do you want to receive an additional pupil?"

I think the interrogatory tone thus employed was wholly sarcastic. Michael's gloomy face flushed hotly, but Hope laid her hand upon his arm.

"I dare say," he answered, with an effort, "that I might make room for another."

Hollingsford shrugged his shoulders. He had eyes to see.

"I wish to engage a musical instructor—from all accounts of you, you will do as well as any other. Be so kind as to call to-morrow at eleven."

He scribbled an address on a card, and threw it down on Hope's little table.

"Terms to suit yourself," he said, carelessly.

Gayle's brow was slowly contracting.

"Who is the pupil?" he asked.

"My sister, sir—Miss Hollingsford."

"I will consider the matter," said Gayle, turning on his heel.

Colonel Ross Hollingsford went stalking to the door. Then the youth—the remarkably fine physique of the poor musician, and perhaps some latent thought, seemed to strike him for the first time.

"Sir," he said, stiffly, "one thing more. You will do well to remember in my house the relative position of master and pupil. Miss Hollingsford is young. Good-day."

Without waiting to observe the effect produced by this adieu, Colonel Hollingsford made the passage of that front-stair carpet again, and entered a carriage waiting outside, an elegant affair, embellished with plate glass and purple velvet, and the Hollingsford coat of arms. A lithe young figure, wrapped up in velvet and moire antique, roused up languidly from a corner among the cushions.

"How long you have been!"

"Have I?" said Colonel Hollingsford, taking the opposite seat. "It's well you did not go up, Ethel—such a den of a place!"

"Was he at home?"

"Yes,—I have engaged him for you."

A pause.

"Ethel?"

"Well?"

"He is handsome!"

"Is he?"

"Handsome than any man I ever met," fiercely. "Be careful, will you, that the role of Agnes Hollingsford isn't played over again."

A faint quiver of her sweeping black lashes. She smiled.

"Ross, are you mad?"

"Humph!"

Meantime there was trouble on Mrs. Pinchin's second floor. Michael was pacing the little parlor, fiery and foaming. Hope stood pale and frightened on the hearth.

"What *did* he mean, Michael?"

"I do not know, unless it was an allusion to that misalliance of Agnes Hollingsford."

"How very rude!"

"Curse his insolence!" burst out Gayle.

"I did wrong, Hope; I should have pitched him neck and heels down the stairs."

"O no," cried Hope, earnestly, eagerly; "it is a great good fortune—indeed it is, Michael! They have wealth, influence—everything—those Hollingsfords. They might help you so much! Who knows to what it may lead?"

Michael looked down into her thin flushed face with a bitter smile.

"Lead?" he echoed. "I shall not accept their offer, Hope. I would starve first!"

"Michael! Michael!"

She forced him down to her with her slender white arms, and gazed sorrowfully into his eyes.

"I will not!" he repeated, sullenly.

"Ah," pleaded the soft voice, "think what the money will bring you, independent of the connection. You have so little—you need so much; and I am—I have always been, dear—a dead weight—"

"Hush!" sternly.

Returning to the charge, she pleaded:

"For *my* sake, Michael!"

She had conquered. Yea, for her sake, and hers alone, he yielded. Hope kissed him with great tears in her eyes.

"It is hard to be so poor," she sighed to herself, "hard for anybody proud and resentful like Michael. I hope he will not see much of Colonel Hollingsford. He did not know, I am sure, that Michael is a gentleman in truth and breeding as well as himself."

Miss Hope was an innocent, you see. The new pupil was not discussed at further length that night. Michael munched his supper in an odd abstracted way; Hope

watched him furtively, quaking in her shoes lest his resolution should not hold good till morning. However, it did.

Under these circumstances—not the most favorable, you must admit—Michael Gayle set forth at the appointed time in quest of his pupil.

He was late. Miss Hollingsford rose up from a low velvet chair sheltered amid the rose-colored damask and foamy lace of a deep bay window, and floated—he could think of no term more appropriate—towards him, like a pale sea-lily, half-languid, half-indifferent, wholly graceful. Whatever nursery fledgling Gayle had pictured to himself, he then and there experienced a lively disappointment. Instead of bread and butter and the alphabet, here were patchouli and heliotropes. He saw that his pupil was a young lady, somewhere upon the borders of twenty, a very highbred and elegant person, with a face that seemed to him the embodied passion and sweetness of a southern waltz, clear-cut and creamy, with purple-black coils of hair, and large languid eyes.

"Pardon me," began Gayle, feeling a singular abatement of some previous prejudices. "I fear I have kept you waiting?"

"It does not matter," answered Miss Hollingsford, with a rare smile. "I had nothing else to do this rainy morning."

He went to the open piano, and turned some loose leaves of music lying thereon. Evidently they surprised him.

"You have passed your novitiate?" he said.

Miss Hollingsford was regarding him quietly from the other side of the instrument.

"Yes."

"What can you require of me?" said Gayle.

"I have but lately returned from school. My knowledge of music was all acquired there."

"Yes."

"It is superficial."

"Yes."

"It lacks both depth and finish."

He wheeled a crimson music-stool into place.

"Shall I trouble you to play over this opera aria?" he said, looking at her.

She obeyed. A fine touch, a delicate ear, but her self-criticism was just.

"Thank you," said Gayle, putting the music back; "that will do."

The beginning was entered upon. He remained an hour, breathing in the luxurious beauty and warmth of the room, talking quietly to Miss Hollingsford, or watching her hands flitting like moonlight across the inlaid keys—beautiful hands, patrician in every line—and inhaling vague odors with the rustling of her dress, and the stir of her hair. Ah, how very wise he thought himself that morning! How clearly he saw his way with these high and mighty Hollingsfords. Alas! and alas!

That night Michael Gayle commenced a new "Melodia." That night Ethel Hollingsford, looking out from her gilded box into the orchestra of the theatre, spied therein the pale Greek face of the poor musician. Colonel Ross, sitting dark and haughty at her side, straightway brought his lorgnette to bear in the same direction. Something he said to her in a low tone.

"Really, Ross," pouted Miss Hollingsford, with a droop of her white eyelids, "you might allow me to amuse myself as I please."

"Amuse yourself, if you want to, but—"
"Pshaw!"

That night Hope Gayle, who always remained up till Michael's return from the play, stood in her old place on the hearth, and looked into his face with tender searching eyes.

"Tell me what she is like, Michael."

"Who, Dame Hubbard?"

"Your Miss Hollingsford."

He laughed.

"She is slender and dark."

"With beautiful eyes?"

"Yes."

"And red lips."

"Where have you seen her?" in amaze.

"I have not seen her, brother mine, only she must be like Colonel Hollingsford."

"Very unlike him," answered Michael.

Hope leaned her forehead against the low mantel and looked into the fire. It was near midnight. A little German clock was ticking in a niche. The sleepy scent of her mignonette filled the room, the fire-light fell on her wan face and small deformed figure, and threw her shadow dark upon the threadbare carpet.

"Michael," she called, softly.

"Well, little Hope."

"Do you not know that kindness is sometimes as cruel as death?"

He understood her, and flushed a stormy scarlet color up to his very temples.

"Silly puss!" he answered, rallying. "So you have got that bee in your bonnet! Am I not writing a new 'Melodia?' Are we not to be more famous than all the Hollingsfords—you and I, Hope? Do I not know that whom the gods design to destroy they first make mad?"

He went away to the piano, and directly the pulses of his music were throbbing through the purple dimness of the room. Hope kept her place on the hearth, listening, but with eyes that had grown troubled. Women have keen perceptions. She was quieted for a time, but not satisfied.

The weeks passed on. Two or three hours of each were spent in the drawing-room of the Hollingsfords. It was generally tenantless when Gayle entered, giving him a sense of sumptuous repose in its rich draperies and magnificent appointments. Then he would hear the stir of Miss Hollingsford's dress upon the stairs, or the tap of her little slippers, and she would stand, framed like a picture, in the doorway, always with the same air of highbred repose, the purple-black tresses waving away from her forehead, and a smile half asleep in her slow black eyes. Not that they were ever alone. There was always some duenna in attendance. But I doubt if Gayle noticed the peculiarity; I doubt if he ever really saw any one but his pupil.

One day he surprised her indolently lying on a pile of Turkish cushions, and looking like an Indian princess, with her dark arms wreathed above her head; and she had sprung up, laughing and blushing under his gaze, and mischievously showed him her watch, by which he found that he was a full half hour before his usual time; and the duenna frowned, and Miss Hollingsford was unaccountably grave and silent during her morning's lesson. Often he lingered after those lessons were done, to play her wild, intricate German melodies, or the last opera; and standing at his side she would watch his inspired face, her breath coming quick, her black eyes filling up with feverish light, her scarlet lips parting for the sigh that he always fancied but never heard. Ah, what flattery could have been more innocent and more subtle? Golden hours.

Night after night, from the orchestra of the crowded theatre, Gayle sat gazing up at

her box, seeing through the opening of its curtain her creamy face looking down, noting, perhaps, some bracelet on her arm, some wave of her fan, some pearl in her hair. Then out of the heated house, and the gaslight, away from the scornful stare of Colonel Hollingsford's eyes, he would go home, worn and haggard, to sit till gray dawn at the old piano on Mrs. Pinchin's second floor, weaving into that new "Melodia" its soul and its life. All that it had lacked before—that wonderful essence which he could never grasp, or comprehend, but which had haunted him always, was his own at last. Won in still dark hours of his heart's travail, won in pain, at a dreary cost perhaps—but won!

And "Melodia" drew near its completion.

It chanced that Michael Gayle one day found his pupil quite alone. The duenna had deserted. Miss Hollingsford stood at a buhl table, arranging thereon some lilies in a slender Roman jar, and teasing alternately a King Charles's spaniel who snapped at the flowers, and thrust his brown paws into the jar in a state of insubordination generally. Gayle held him in abeyance, and his impatience also, till her task was finished; then Miss Hollingsford came towards him, with red lips smiling, and a velvety softness radiating from her great eyes.

"Go away, Brownie," pushing aside the spaniel.

Gayle unrolled some music and laid it upon the piano.

"Here are the pieces you requested, Miss Hollingsford. I found them after some search."

She took them up carelessly.

"Thank you. Do you have much leisure?" said Miss Hollingsford.

"But very little."

"Because I was about to ask a favor of you," graciously.

"Ah?" with a hot thrill.

"We dine at five to-morrow," she said, toying with the music. "It is my birthday. Perhaps you will join us."

In the mingled surprise and rapture of the moment some random and unintelligible reply Gayle made, but she went on, careless and unheeding.

"My brother is absent from town. It will be a very quiet party—personal friends all. I will not keep you waiting longer."

And Miss Hollingsford sat down to her lesson.

Away from it and away from her Gayle went home that day like one in a dream. What there was in the matter to justify this state of feeling, only those who have passed through similar experiences can tell. Then, too, "Melodia" was finished. The pet darling of his heart and brain had gone forth on its mission at last. He was hopeful—more yet, happy; but Hope heard of Miss Hollingsford's dinner-party with a vague mingling of pleasure and trepidation.

It was very kind of her, of course. Truth to tell, Miss Hollingsford was always kind to Michael. Very fortunate, too, that the colonel was to be absent, and that there could be no chance of an encounter betwixt the two, even in the characters of host and guest; and then Hope began to look thoughtful, and presently two hands were laid upon her head, and her little pale face was drawn back, and Michael stood smiling down at her.

"Hope," he said, arching his eyebrows. "Mademoiselle Sephanie rehearsed 'Melodia' to-day."

"And—and—" cried Hope, breathlessly.

"You are to go to the play with me and hear it sung!"

Hope danced upon the hearth in spite of her hump, as Michael told the story of mademoiselle's little French ecstasies over the piece, and how the manager, usually sour and crabbed, had not disdained to congratulate him upon the certainty of its success. Ah, how bright the threadbare carpet and the battered old furniture looked then! And the fire burned with a genial happy glow, and Hope, sitting down at last to her embroidery, wondered if there was ever such a brother as Michael before—ever any one, in fact, who knew so much, and was so tender and good. Let us see.

It was a sorry disappointment which awaited both upon the morrow. Mademoiselle Sephanie was not at rehearsal. She was laid away somewhere in goose-grease and flannel, the prey of influenza, and could not sing "Melodia." The manager growled. Gayle bit his lip in perplexity. Clearly "Melodia" could not appear on the bills unless some other artiste was found.

Some other rare soprano like mademoiselle; no other should dally with "Melodia." But where to find one, and how? Such offers as were tendered him Gayle could

only politely decline. He could not doom his pet creation to its sure death.

Revolving the disappointment and its remedy in his mind, Gayle set forth for the Hollingsfords. He was one of the last to arrive. The dinner-party was probably a quiet one in the young hostess's acceptance of the term, but certainly not in Michael's. He found the drawing-room the *creme de la creme* of a most exclusive set, among which the principal attraction appeared to be Miss Hollingsford herself, in a dinner-dress of maize-colored silk and point lace, with a snaky zigzag line of Indian opal in her hair.

Gayle's troubles took to themselves wings and flew away. He was elbowed, somehow, into a corner, near an open glass door, beyond which he could hear the dropping of water, and smell the aromatic breath of plants, blossoming in the purple shadow of their own luxuriance. Some curious glances Gayle received, of course; some whispered inquiries, not intended for him, reached his ear—an ear too sensitive by half; but the Indian opals were glittering tremulously not a yard distant, and he could almost feel the flutter of her little silvery fan, and as it chanced that he had been turned over to the mercies of some kindly genial spirits, who had an interest in discussing the last opera, Gayle abandoned himself for the time being to them and to fate.

His place at dinner happened to be beside the same parties. It was a brilliant affair, composed principally of plate and Sevres, and elegant small-talk, and much drinking of Miss Hollingsford's health. During desert, while Gayle sat idly toying with a cluster of grapes upon his plate, and covertly watching down the length of the table, Miss Hollingsford queening it over her little court, a voice at his elbow, lowered perceptibly, arrested his attention.

"Singular, is it not, that nothing more was ever known of that poor unfortunate Agnes Hollingsford?"

"Ransom tells me that she died abroad."

"That is the general belief; but all traces of her were lost years ago."

"Whom did she marry?" queried the second voice.

"I never heard the name. Some obscure person—her music-teacher, I think. Of course, you have heard the story. She eloped, and was disowned in consequence."

"And these present Hollingsfords?"

"O, they come of a remote branch. The ill wind that wrecked her fortune made theirs. Shall I trouble you to pass the Madeira?"

Gayle heard no more. He sat silent and absorbed till the party moved back to the drawing-room.

The straws of circumstances are the weapons of fate. Gayle, in his unsocial mood, turned to the glass door with something like relief, and passing through, found himself in a miniature wilderness of shrubs and creeping plants, the whole dimly lighted, and filled with the soft splash of the fountain into its marble basin.

A few loiterers were there before him. Gayle found a bamboo chair in a recess, and sat down, hearing the low hum of their voices mingling with the dropping water. Some Japan lilies were growing in a Tuscan urn at his side. Overhead, the thick glossy leaves of the German ivy darkened and draped the walls, and a creeping plant, blooming in a great gnarled cup of twisted vine, dropped down its musky odor, like some censor a-swing, in the slowly purpling dusk.

By-and-by the voices grew still. Some gay waltz music came floating in from the drawing-room, and Gayle roused himself to find that he was alone, and the place deserted. He rose up, and walked to the fountain. Something lay at its brink, a patch of moonlight, perhaps, a mist-wreath, a spider's web—he bent and picked it up; nothing in the world but a delicate *mouchoir*, bordered with point lace.

As Gayle held it up to the light there was a stir, as of drapery, near by, and turning, he saw Miss Hollingsford gazing at him from the other side of the fountain.

"Ah!" she said, "I was wondering whither you had flown."

"In the track of your footsteps," answered Gayle. "See! here is a token."

"And pray, how do you know that is mine?"

"Partly by my instinct—partly by its sweetness."

She laughed as she took the handkerchief. Their hands met for an instant in its lace—hers cool and velvety, his like fire. He looked down upon her in the soft dim light. Her cheek was flushed, her large lids a-droop, and one great warm tress of hair had fallen in a quivering curl upon her neck. Gayle drew his breath quickly

"Is it not a stupid affair?" she said, smothering a little yawn behind the bars of her fan. "People rarely expect themselves to be sensible. I have heard of but one new thing to-night, and that is about yourself."

"Ah!" cried Gayle, almost breathless.

"Mrs. Paine, *au fait* always in such matters, assures me that I am entertaining genius unawares."

"I'm obliged to Mrs. Paine," was the mocking reply.

Miss Hollingsford shook her head.

"Don't scoff. You did not hear the discussion. Why have you never brought me your songs?"

"I have brought you better ones."

"I do not know that," kindly; "tell me about them, will you not?"

So, hugging closer and closer the folly of the moment, what could Gayle do but obey? Slowly they walked away together, deeper into the stillness and bloom of the place. Miss Hollingsford listened, hushed and breathless. All the pride had gone out of her face—nothing was left there but its tender sympathetic womanhood. It was the first and last time in her whole life that Ethel Hollingsford ever forgot herself; and, meanwhile, Gayle went on, eagerly, passionately, telling her of himself, of "Melodia" of Hope—opening to her gaze a vista of bold ambitions, while his eyes gathered fire, and his lips eloquence. They had reached a turn in their walk. Near by, a night-blooming cereus was just unfolding its blossoms honeyed with deadly sweetness. The very air was thick with powdery perfume. Miss Hollingsford lifted a face that had grown suddenly pale, and looked at him.

"You have my best wishes for your future," she said, simply.

"That is not enough, Ethel!"

He did not seek to take her hand, as a more hopeful lover might have done, nor to draw nearer, but with a sort of proud reserve he went on:

"I love you, Ethel Hollingsford—how dearly, God alone knows! Nay, do not misunderstand me, I ask for nothing now; but by-and-by, if the day comes when I have made myself worthy of you, promise me, Ethel, that you will listen to me then—that you will not quite forget me."

Dangerous as she had seen that her play was getting to be, I hardly think that Miss Hollingsford had anticipated anything so

serious as this. Worse yet, she was conscious of a weakness of her own, beginning to assert itself. She stood terrified, perplexed; but the answer framing itself upon her lips, Gayle never heard, for, stepping suddenly from the shadow of the night-blooming cereus, a tall figure, cloaked and mud-bespattered, strode between the two, and Colonel Ross Hollingsford turned his pale infuriated face on Gayle.

"Go!" he thundered, pointing to the door.

"Not till I receive Miss Hollingsford's answer," replied Gayle, calmly.

The dark mud-bespattered apparition wheeled upon Miss Hollingsford.

"Speak, Ethel!"

Her face was half averted, its cold clear look made Gayle's heart sink within him. The answer came, cruel as death, "Go!"

How he made the passage of the drawing-room and reached the street, Gayle never knew nor cared to know. The dark winter's night was closing in—the street-lamps flared in the raw east gusts. He rushed away from the accursed spot. Away, hither and thither, for some time recklessly. Then that mood passed. The latent scorn, the white anger died out. He stood under the night sky, and lifted his cap, and suffered the cold wind to strike his flushed forehead. The square was full of gay equipages; a blaze of gaslight streamed from the dwellings opposite, and but a few yards distant a little troupe of street-singers, with a trained monkey, were performing to a motley audience.

He had reaped the fruits of his own folly. Now that the scales had fallen from his eyes, how clearly he could see! Then he thought of Hope, and walked on.

He had passed the street-singers, never deigning a glance at their ragged shivering figures, when a shrill click of a castanet overtook his footsteps, and then, a voice from their midst, echoing up and down the street, like a bugle-call, broke forth in the sweet old song of "Annie Laurie." One moment Gayle paused and held his breath to listen. Then he paused quickly, and made his way back to the itinerant musicians.

He had dreamed of a voice like that in his hours of inspiration—dreamed, and that was all. Never out of the realm of ideality had he heard anything like it. Ethel Hollingsford, his wrong and his sorrow, van-

ished for the moment away. His pulses quickened in vague transport. Forcing his way into the now rapidly gathering crowd, he pushed on, regardless of their disgust, until he found himself within view of the singer.

A slight fragile girl, wrapped in a faded shawl, with some long tresses of hair struggling through her woollen hood. In view of her tremendous vocal power, the child's physique seemed even more delicate than it really was. For her face, in some other atmosphere, perhaps, it might have been beautiful, but now it was blue with cold, and pinched and haggard withal, and her eyes had a scared and piteous look.

Gayle stood gazing at her in pity and amaze. Who could she be, wandering about thus, with a troupe of common organ-grinders? for, apart from the truly wonderful merits of the voice itself, a less experienced ear than Gayle's might have detected its rare and thorough cultivation. He wondered vaguely if she belonged to that rough bleared fellow grinding the organ, and if he had any idea of the value of such a voice as that, and then a sweet strain of "Melodia" flitted through his memory, and like an inspiration, came the thought of *Mademoiselle Sephanie* laid up in goose-grease, and the song waiting to be sung.

A shout of applause followed the ending of "Annie Laurie." A little shower of coin fell on the castanet.

"By Jove! that is singing!" said some one behind Gayle.

He fancied the voice familiar, and set his teeth. It passed on, however, and Gayle went up to the fellow at the organ.

"Well, my man," he said, "you have caught a songbird."

"Out," answered the man.

"Your daughter?"

"Non."

"Step aside with me," said Gayle, "and let me speak with you."

The fellow stood in perplexity; then he made a gesture.

"Terese!"

She came at the call, just glancing at Gayle with those pitiful brown eyes of hers.

"Carlos does not speak English, monsieur," she said.

"Well," answered Gayle, "you will do better than Carlos. It was of you that I wanted to ask. Who taught you to sing like that?"

"My father, monsieur."

"What! this man?"

"O no, Carlos is not my father."

"Where is he?"

"Dead."

"What is your name?"

"Terese Raoul."

"Well, Terese, do you like to sing in the street?"

"Ah no, monsieur," she answered, sadly.

"Would you leave these people, would you come with me to sing elsewhere?" cried Gayle.

Her eyes filled. A flush crossed the pale cheek.

"I would indeed, monsieur!"

"Melodia, Melodia!" chimed Gayle's heart within him.

"But Carlos," said Terese.

"Come," answered Gayle, "let us talk with Carlos."

Terese interpreted. A hard bargain it was, and closely driven, one party being stanch and determined, the others tubborn as a mule. The poor child shrunk up to Gayle, shivering in her faded shawl, and growing bluer and bluer. Finally, as the last crowning effort was made, Gayle's purse was called into requisition, and the result was that Carlos shouldered his organ and monkey, and went on his way growling. And half an hour after, Michael mounted Mrs. Pinchin's stairs, bearing a bundle, and an old cracked violin, the sole earthly possessions of Terese Raoul, and Terese herself plodded breathlessly after into the new home whose door he had thus opened for her.

Away fled Gayle to the play before Hope could ask a half dozen questions—little enough to satisfy her curiosity. Terese had been deposited in a chair, and the bundle and cracked violin upon the piano. Hope was dumfounded, then dismayed, and then, ah, then, she was pitying! This pity, like some plants that I wot of, once finding root, soon grew indefinitely.

"Take off your hood," said Hope, "and draw up to the fire, child. You must be very cold."

And besides she was anxious to see what Michael had brought home. Terese came forward timidly.

A small classic head, with a low wide forehead of opaque white, large eyes like a deer's—innocent and startled in their look, and a tremendous mass of crushed curls,

twisted and tangled into a most ineffectual knot, and bronzed over with chestnut and gold. That was what Michael had brought home!

Hope dropped her napkins on the table, and stared.

"Why! how pretty you are!" she cried, with unfeigned admiration; "and an American, too—I am sure you *are* an American?"

Terese shook her head sadly.

"I was born in Paris, mademoiselle."

"And pray, how did you ever learn to speak English without an accent?" cried Hope.

The clear voice fell.

"It was my mother's tongue. She died at my birth, but she loved America."

"And who taught you to speak English?" said Hope.

"My father and Joan. Joan was my mother's maid. She came with her to Paris, and lived with us there after her death."

"O," cried Hope, smiling, "here is a story, I am sure. Would you tell me about it, while I make the toast, my dear?"

"There is little to tell," answered Terese, a great tear falling on her cheek, in the firelight. "We lived in the Rue St. —, my father, Joan and I—in an old house that had a little court and a fountain, and some laburnums. My father was always sad and silent. Joan said my mother's death had broken his heart. He earned our living by playing the violin, and teaching a few pupils, who sometimes came and played with me in the old court, after the lessons were done. We were very poor, and Joan would sometimes weep, and ask him to go to America, but he always refused. I had been at school a long time in an old convent, not a stone's throw from the old court, when my father came one day, tottering and gray, like a very old man, and told me that Joan was dead."

"Ah, how dreary it was then! Everything in the house was sold but my father's violin. We left Paris, he and I, and went to Havre, and there my father told me that we were going to America, at last; but, mademoiselle, he did not live to see America; he never spoke after we had embarked, and they buried him at sea, and all I had left in the world was a single franc piece and the violin."

Terese paused with a sob swelling her round throat.

"O, you dear child," cried Hope, "what ever did you do?"

"Ah," said Terese, "Carlos was on board, with his good wife Marie, and the monkey, and they were kind to me, and I have been with them ever since—it is more than a month now—and to-day I sang with them at the street corners, and I am sorry Carlos went away angry, for indeed, indeed, mademoiselle, I could never pass another day like this!"

"Certainly," said Miss Gayle, with indignation, "anybody would know that with eyes in their heads. We will see, by-and-by, what Michael means to do with you. What is your age?"

"Seventeen years," answered Terese.

Hope for a moment looked blank. Good gracious! Michael was but twenty-six. She had not thought the child so old.

"Well," she said, presently, in a quick cheery way, "dry your eyes, my dear, and come and take some toast and tea with a humpbacked old woman twice your age. I can play duenna," *sotto voce*, "and Mrs. Pinchin will never dare to gossip."

So, when Michael returned at midnight, worn and haggard, the bundle and the shrinking, shivering owner thereof had disappeared from the little parlor; but he saw that the violin stood against his music-rack, with the firelight shimmering on its bleared and weather-stained face, and Hope sat on the hearth—dear little Hope! waiting for him.

"She has gone to sleep in my bed," motioning Michael to a seat beside her. "Poor child!"

"Have you heard her sing?" asked Gayle. Hope answered him with dancing eyes.

"Is she not better than Mademoiselle Sephanie, Michael?"

"Very much better, I think."

"And now," abruptly, "what is to be done with her?"

Gayle pondered.

"She must go with me to rehearsal to-morrow. If she proves as apt as I believe her to be, "Melodia" may be sung to-morrow evening. Then the manager will give her an engagement, probably—I have spoken to him."

Hope made a quick dissenting gesture.

"Michael, you are a precious goose!"

"What now?" queried Michael.

"She is no more fit for a public singer than I am—there!"

"Hope?"

"That tender delicate child! You will see."

"Is she a child?" said Gayle, gravely.

"She is no better than one. And such a face as she has—such little white hands! did you see them? by-and-by, in abeyance long enough, I want to know about Miss Hollingsford's dinner."

She threw her arm coaxingly over his neck. A fiery streak shot across his cheek, then paled away.

"Don't, Hope!" he said, turning his pale face from her.

I think she must have guessed at the truth—she had, for a long time been noting vague signs from day to day. Now there was a silence. He sought sympathy—she obtruded none upon him—nothing but that one clasping arm.

"Hope," he said, at last, turning upon her a calm and quiet face, "I have played the fool's part—let it pass. Wisdom comes of hard teaching. You shall see how I will make amends."

She understood him—no answer was needed; but her pitying eyes smiled into his through their tears.

"Try to forget, Michael."

"I will!" he answered her fervently.

And there it ended—Michael Gayle's first love-dream.

He did not sleep that night. All through the still small hours, Hope, tossing upon her pillow beside the sleeping Terese, listened to his troubled heart pouring itself out in strong crashes of music, and a tremulous plaint of minor chords, that made her heart ache as she listened. In vain were Mrs. Pinchin's warning knocks on the ceiling below. But a remedy came at morn, in the shape of Terese, standing, lithe and slender in the doorway, looking at him, with her quick breath coming like perfume through the red blossom of her lips. It recalled him to himself and to the present. He started, his face changing as if a sun-beam had struck across it. Then he thought of "Melodia."

Terese sang the score, while Hope was impatiently waiting breakfast. Gayle sat listening for a time, with face averted, and glittering eyes. Then his accompaniment died away, his hands dropped from the keys—he was hanging upon her voice, like a bee in the sun-dipped hearts of the lilies. What was this? This slender puny child, selzing,

at a glance, upon the divine and subtle mysteries of his music—poising a flight above them, even to hint of others yet more divine? He fancied her drawing in the plaint and passion with her quickened breath—into some deeps of her own soul, perhaps, to distil them again in a full floodtide of fiery and newborn life, such as he could never could have given! Here were the overshadowing wings of idealities, higher and mightier than his own. Here was "Melodia" perfected anew! His heart seemed flooded within him, with delicious rapturous tears.

"Our positions are reversed," he said, rising, as he lifted his eyes to the flushed and drooping face of Terese. "You are the master, I the pupil!"

A hackney coach rattled down the street at nightfall, and stopped at Mrs. Pinchin's door. Two figures veiled, descended the steps, shortly after, and entering it, were driven rapidly away. Hope Gayle, for the sake of the fair young debutante beside her, yet not without some Puritanic shrinking, as became her blood, was to make her first acquaintance with the green-room of a theatre.

From his place in the orchestra, Michael Gayle glanced listlessly about the house, filled with the hum of arrival, and whispered conversation, and crowded that night almost to suffocation. With the thought of Hope and her charge, came a little thrill of dismay. What would the poor timid child ever do in the face and eyes of such a multitude?

Suddenly, drawn thither by a magnetism that he could not withstand, Gayle's eyes wandered to the Hollingsford box. Yes, there she sat, with her magnificent opera-cape slipping a-down her imperial shoulders, and her beautiful dark arms bound with broad bracelets of dull red gold, Ethel Hollingsford! She must have felt his intent gaze, for her broad lids were suddenly raised, and as the eyes beneath met his own, a flash that was not color, but a white heat, like lightning, swept across the dark languid face. Instantly the look was withdrawn, and he caught a shaft of diamond light scintillating in a cloudy setting of hair, as she sank back behind the curtains of the box.

Then Gayle saw that it had other occupants. Colonel Hollingsford had raised his lorgnette, and was staring down at him with curled lips. Gayle felt the furious blood

leaping up. He went on playing his violin, and looked no more at the Hollingsford box.

The tragedy was over, and the curtain down. The house sat waiting—tier upon tier of people, all in a flutter of fans and marabout feathers. Somebody was going to sing.

Miss Hollingsford was looking listlessly into the parquette. The colonel sat twirling a bouquet of waxen-white camellias in one snowy-gloved hand.

"Let us go, Ross," in a whisper.

"Yes, directly. There goes the curtain."

There are those who will still remember the night of which I write, and the star that rose and set with it, full of glorious prophecies which none ever saw fulfilled. Terese stood confronting the footlights and the crowd. A slight and flexible shape, in a flutter of white gauze, greeted at the outset by a low hum of admiration throughout the house.

There she stood, the light slanting off the golden chestnut of her hair, and sinking couchant into the wide brown eyes—eyes that saw nothing but one face uplifted to her from the orchestra, calm and kindly encouraging. So Terese began to sing.

A deep dead silence, broken by no whisper, no rustle! A sea of rapt and eager faces, turned on the young debutante; a flutter of breath, held faintly on parted lips; a rhythmic beat of enchanted pulses! Colonel Hollingsford leaned over the velvet railing of his box, with a look in his eyes that made Gayle set his teeth in a spasm of futile rage. So they listened!

At last it broke—the roar, the thunder of applause that seemed to shake the very theatre. Terese stood wavering, uncertain, her small hands locked, her eyes dilated; there were flowers falling around; the air ached with scents of suffocating sweetness; she stood on untold abysses of pain; the face in the orchestra had faded from her sight; in its place, another face, dark and cruelly handsome, flashed out its fire upon her 'twixt the parted curtains of a box near by; a bunch of waxen-white camellias was hurled at her feet. Then, the dark green of the stage-curtain descended, and none too soon. Without a sound or cry Terese had fallen, a white and senseless thing among the flowers!

That was the setting of the star. They called it stage-fright in the greenroom, laughed at Hope's terror. It was a grand

debut!—she would get bravely over these trifles soon—deluging the pale insensible girl meanwhile with cologne and aromatic vinegar. Hope contracted her brows, and answered not a word.

Terese was carried home, more dead than alive, nestled up to Hope in one corner of the coach, and Michael on the opposite seat, his temper not materially improved by having seen the tall dark figure of Colonel Hollingsford watching them from the door of the theatre, as they rolled away. There was another conference that night in the little parlor on Mrs. Pinchin's second floor.

"What did I tell you?" snapped Hope.

Michael's forehead was bowed upon his hand.

"You were quite right," he answered, meekly.

"And now, what is to be done? Can you tell me that?"

"She must remain with us," answered Gayle, quickly. "She has no home—we are bound to befriend her, Hope."

"And who said we were not?" sharply, though, truth to tell, the little woman's eyes were filling; "what I mean you to understand, you dear old goose, is that Miss Raoul will never willingly be dependent upon either of us—there!"

Gayle looked perplexed.

"She ought never to sing in public," he said, gravely.

"Never?" echoed Hope.

"Possibly she might teach."

Hope shook her head.

"I doubt it. Where are your pupils? We have no influence."

"Could you teach her to embroider, Hope?"

"She will need no learning, I fancy. She has been in a convent."

"You would have a pleasant companion."

"And I am sure our expenses could be but a trifle more."

"Certainly not."

Hope clapped her hands like a child.

"Ah, that will do! Michael, I have a fancy about Terese. If the days of wandering princesses were not over and gone, I should be sure that you and I were entertaining one incognito."

He arched his eyebrows at her.

"And not one word of 'Melodja,' all this time?"

"It is a success," Hope answered, positively.

"Yes, thanks to mademoiselle."

She threw back a parting question over her shoulder in going out.

"Michael, did you see Colonel Hollingsford to-night?"

He scowled assent.

"What made him stare at us so—more particularly at Terese? Ugh! that man is evil to the core."

Terese's case had departed from her own hands. She was provided for, and her future settled, even as she slept. Hope reviewed the matter with her on the following day, and laid down its particular points with dignity. Their home was hers. There was no need of prideful flushes—she was not to be dependent. She could embroider with Hope—that would ensure her a livelihood—and here Hope shrugged her shoulders—and she must pursue her musical studies with Michael, and dance, and sing, and be happy. Not a very unhappy prospect, surely, for a girl of seventeen.

A few grateful tears welled up through Terese's white lids. She wondered vaguely how she was ever to repay them—how—indeed? The old cracked violin, her father's sole legacy, was carried away to her little chamber, and reverently hung upon the wall; and the poor child, her heart swelling with an indefinable happiness and delight, nestled down contentedly into this stranger nest.

Charity brings its own reward, since it blesses the giver as well as the receiver. Michael Gayle had found an embodied sunbeam for the wintry shadows of Mrs. Pinchin's second floor—a magical springtime of beauty and youth. It was pleasant to watch its unfolding in the warm home atmosphere! It was pleasant to come in at twilight, weary and worn, and find her at the old piano, singing his quaint German songs in their own sonorous tongue; pleasant to see her of nights when the rain was falling, standing dreamy-eyed beside his fire, with its light upon her hair; pleasant to hear her flitting through the room, shedding sweetesses about her, as a flower sheds perfume; and, mayhap, he noticed the while, the glorious womanhood into which she was passing.

Ascending the stairs one day, Gayle's nostrils were greeted with a peculiar odor somewhere near, as of a spice wind, blowing out of the heart of some tropic summer. The matter was more fully explained on

reaching the landing, where Hope stood, indignantly confronting a tall footman in livery, who held in his hand a magnificent bouquet of hothouse exotics. Michael recognized the fellow, with a burning thrill.

"Well," he said, sharply, "what do you want here?"

The man backed off, as if he did not care to go, but rather thought it best.

"Here is a bouquet for Miss Raoul, sir—it is to be presented to her, with Colonel Hollingsford's compliments."

"O!" cried Hope, with an indignant shriek.

Straightway she was pushed into the little parlor, and the door closed upon her, shutting out Michael's white face, and the impertinent stare of the footman. What she next heard convinced her that the gift and its bearer had made a rapid descent of Mrs. Pinchin's stairs. Presently Michael came in, looking particularly calm.

"How long has this been in progress, Hope?" he said.

"I don't know," answered Hope, quaking, "a month or more. Pray, don't distress Terese!"

"I will not."

"I have sent all the bouquets back, and we have not stirred from the house these three weeks, just from the fear of meeting him."

Hope's eyes flashed angrily.

"He will send no more bouquets, I fancy" was the grim rejoinder; "why did you not tell me of this before?"

"What good would it have done? Moreover, Terese opposed it."

Michael turned on his heel.

"Go out henceforth, as you please; I will see that you have nothing to fear."

And, truth to tell, no more bouquets came from Colonel Hollingsford, and things went on very much as before, except that Terese breathed freer, perhaps, and was allowed to languish no longer for want of fresh air.

It was in the wet and weary days of early spring that Michael fell ill—a slight cold, he said, at first; it would soon pass; he had worked too hard. Hope, sitting at the bedside, looked at his pale face and glittering eyes, and shivered with mortal terror.

"I will send a note to the leader of the orchestra," he said, faintly; "do you think you could take it, Hope? He must get

some one to fill my place to-night—to-morrow I shall be well again."

"Terese will take it, I must stay with you," answered Hope.

He looked at her wistfully, but did not speak. Terese, quite as pale as Hope herself, threw on her bonnet and shawl, not forgetting her heavy veil, and departed with fleet steps upon her errand.

The twilight was already closing in. For the street, it was well known to her, and not more than a half mile distant. She hurried on, jostled rudely by the crowd, the raw east wind blowing sharply in her face, and tossing back her veil and playing all sorts of pranks with her hair. Having duly delivered the note, Terese had turned homeward, her pulses quickened by the gathering twilight, when she heard behind her on the pavement a quick heavy footstep advancing swiftly, and directly after, a voice.

"Miss Raoul," it called.

She turned in her terror, throwing back her veil to see the dark cruel face of Colonel Hollingsford, smiling down into her own.

"At last," he cried, with an intonation of mingled rage and tenderness; "at last, I have found you, Terese?"

Terese rallied with an effort.

"Let me pass," she commanded, coldly; "I am going home."

"When you have listened to me," he answered. "See! the street is quite deserted—there is no one near."

"How dare you detain me?" flashed Terese.

"Dare! I like that."

She tried to pass him, but his extended arm barred her progress.

"Hear me, Terese," he broke forth in passionate pleading; "a desperate lover must needs employ desperate means. Do you know how your scorn of me has stung—yours and your keepers?"

Terese looked up and down the long street in despair. Then she put up her slender hand, as if to ward away his words.

"Do you know the madness you have brought upon me, since the night I first saw and heard you, Terese? Do you know that under God's heaven you are all that I court?" he cried. "Good reason, indeed, has that poor puppet Gayle to guard you!"

She answered him with a faint terrified cry. "Let me go!"

He went on, never heeding her:

"This much, at least, you do know—that

you are a beggar, Terese, fed by the bounty of beggars! Come with me, I love you, I will give you wealth, honor, position. Leave that drivelling fool to his songs—"

Ah, thank God, some one was coming, at last, down the street, nearer and nearer—footsteps and voices. She broke from him, and fled, as if for life.

Once arrived on Mrs. Pinchin's stairs, down sat Terese, gasping hoarsely, and burst into a passion of tears. She sat there a long time. She dared not go up to Hope, bearing with her any traces of this strange disturbance. Gayle was ill, and the little woman anxious enough already. Fortunately for Terese's secret, Hope's keen eyes now were blind with tears; she hardly knew when the young girl appeared, for Michael was lying in a deathly stupor, broken only by delirious raving. Ah, Terese forgot her night's adventure and Colonel Hollingsford then!

Fever, the physician said—a critical case, and the result was doubtful.

But he was young and strong—he could not loose his hold on life so easily. Fierce and terrible as the struggles were, the worn frame rallied to them, again and yet again, with steadily increasing tenacity. Then, out from agonies of delirium, fainting, sinking, dying, he was hurled forth, stark and motionless, to wait for the end.

It dawned at last, with a glimpse of Hope's face looking through the parted curtains of the bed, wan and hollow-eyed, as if with much watching and weeping—with another figure, that was not Hope, kneeling at his side, and dropping hot tears upon his hand—with droning snatches of old German songs—with a sound of footsteps creeping stilly and slow across the chamber.

Soon his convalescence assumed another color. Life returned, not in faint gleams, but in sober earnest again, with all its old realities. He had been ill for weeks. Terese had grown thin and pale; Hope was but a shadow.

He asked no questions. Why need he? He knew without asking. The hour and the strait—all that had been swallowed up with his illness, all that remained. Had Gayle's mind been at rest, he might have improved rapidly; as it was, week after week passed, and still he sat in his darkened chamber, weak, and helpless as a child.

One day a new revelation burst upon him. The door communicating with the

little parlor had been inadvertently left ajar, and glancing listlessly in, Gayle saw a sight that made his heart stand still.

"Terese!" he called to the slender figure, stitching like mad in the window.

She rose up quickly and came to his side.

"Where is the piano?" he cried.

"It is—is gone," she faltered, tremblingly, hastening to close the door, but too late.

"And my music-rack, and violin, and the pictures?"

She could not answer. She turned her face away.

"Are they sold?" he asked, dreadingly.

"Yes."

He lay silent for a long time, looking up at her with an indescribable sadness. She kept her place at his side, with her face half averted, and the long wet lashes darkening her cheek.

"Terese," he said, at last, "lay your head down here on the pillow beside mine."

Slowly—reluctantly she obeyed.

"Bitter as all this seems to me," he said, "I have one thought that is bitterer still. O Terese, Terese, my darling, my little frail flower, what will become of you?"

It was a cry of unutterable pain, welling up through white lips.

"Sometime, perhaps, you might have loved me, Terese!"

She did not sob or cry. She slid softly down to the floor and knelt there beside him, with their hands clasped.

"My God! my God!" he moaned, with his face in the pillow.

Hope stole in, and found them thus.

"My poor children!" she sighed, softly.

"Hush!" whispered Terese, caressing the wasted hand in her own, and looking up with holy eyes. "We love each other!"

In that chamber, more solemn than the chamber of the dead, the day wore on apace. Michael had fallen into a quiet sleep, and Hope sat beside him, watching. Rising up from the window, Terese folded her embroidery, and with one long wistful look cast at the two, went noiselessly out and into her own chamber.

There was a faint sunset glow on the walls and the bare painted floor. She stood at the threshold and glanced around. Nothing there but the veriest necessities—nothing, surely, to pawn! The windows were open, and the noises of children at play near by stole dreamily in—there was the rumble of wheels on the pavement below. Terese

took down the violin from the wall, and looked at it fondly in the dying light.

A tear splashed down on the silent and dusty strings. Terese's face put on a dreamy far-away look. She was hearing again the fall of the fountain in that old court of Paris—seeing the bright laburnum flowers bordering its damp dark flags, and a walleress waving from the broken wall, and Joan in her white cap and wooden shoes, sitting at the arched portal, and knitting in the sunshine. How dear that old violin had been to her father's heart! When all else was sacrificed, he had clung to that as to a friend! And now it was her mite, priceless in her eyes, but freely given.

Concealing it as she best could beneath her shawl, Terese stole down the stairs and out into the street, noiselessly, lest Hope should hear and intercept her. With the thought of Colonel Hollingsford and his wooing still fresh in her memory, she threw a hurried glance over her shoulder, before drawing her thick veil, but the coast was quite clear—there was no sign or sound of the enemy—nothing but a young spring moon laughing out of a misty purple cloud down into her face—Terese set hastily forth.

Out of that narrow street into the crowded thoroughfares. On, and yet on. The shops grew interminable. She read their signs carefully as she went along. Presently Terese paused with a deep-drawn breath; then opening a door gently, she went in.

Yes, that was the place. A dingy oil lamp lighted it, sputtering feebly. Behind the counter stood the proprietor—a little old man, with a hooked nose and eyes like two glass beads. Terese advanced, with faltering steps, and laid the violin upon the counter.

"Would you," she asked, faintly, "loan me twenty shillings upon this instrument for a few weeks? I do not care to sell it if I can help it."

The pawnbroker took up the violin and examined it by his sputtering lamp; then Terese's heart began to sink.

"Twenty shillin'?" he echoed, scornfully.

"I would redeem it soon," faltered Terese.

He jerked it away with his skinny forefinger.

"Umph! I lend no monish on dat!"

Terese stared at him blankly.

"Surely it is worth something?" she said.

"Then de young lady better take it to another shop," answered the man.

Terese put the violin beneath her shawl again, and went away. For a time she had no further purpose or hope. Then the thought of a second trial occurred to her. How could she go back to those stripped and lonely rooms at Mrs. Pinchin's, failing of her tribute so pitifully! This time she would offer the violin for sale.

A great window of plate glass, filled with leaves of music and the portrait of a prima donna, soon presented to Terese the field that she sought. Pressing close to her the violin, of little value, as it seemed, to any but herself, she entered the store beyond, which chanced to be deserted, except by a genial middle-aged man, engaged in arranging some packages of music on the long and laden shelves, humming to himself as he worked.

To him Terese made known her errand. Her veil had blown aside, and the gentleman stood, listening quietly, and taking in at a glance the pale refined face thus revealed, the delicate shape, the shrinking sorrowful air. His keen gray eyes softened at the sight.

"I am sorry," he began, politely, drawing the bow across the dusty strings, "but I fear, my dear young lady, that the instrument is now nearly worthless—was a fine one in its day."

"But," pleaded Terese, "could it not be repaired?"

"I will examine it, if you wish," said the gentleman, kindly.

She made a quick assenting gesture.

"Perhaps you would call to-morrow?"

Her cheek flushed painfully.

"I cannot," answered Terese; "pardon me—it is a matter of immediate necessity."

"Ah!"

He laid the violin upon the counter; then suddenly raised it again and shook it violently. Terese heard a dull grating sound.

"There is something within it," he said.

Away flew the dark stained woodwork from under his hand, and a cry, sharp and sudden, broke from Terese, as, fluttering downward to her feet, fell two folded papers, one discolored by time, the other bearing the impress of a later day.

Like one in a dream, Terese stooped and picked them up. On the folded surface of one she read, "To my daughter, Terese Agnes Raoul." On the other, "*The mar-*

riage certificate of Jean Louis Raoul and Agnes Hollingsford."

Tremblingly she tore the first one wide open. It ran thus:

"Paris, Sept. 10th, 18—.

"MY CHILD,—At last I have decided!—for your sweet sake we will go to America—to those who cursed your mother, and broke her heart, and spurned her from their doors, because she dared choose the bitter part of love and sorrow—because she dared follow to exile and death your wretched father! You do not remember her, Terese—she kissed you once—then died. Since that hour I have lived—broken-hearted, indeed, but lived to love and cherish you for her sake, and to hate with the deepest hatred the hard and cruel hearts that left her to die here in a foreign land, alone and unforgiven. But the world and its sorrows recede now, and Agnes and heaven grow nearer. If I live to reach America, you will not see this paper; if not, go to William Hollingsford, and tell him you are the child of that daughter that he disowned—a suppliant for a tithe of his idle millions, yours by right of birth and blood—and if he asks of her, tell him that she died forgiving, if not forgiven!

YOUR FATHER."

With a cry that made the place ring, Terese caught up the violin from under the nose of the astonished shopkeeper, and fled into the street.

Home—home to Michael and to Hope, with such news as they had never heard before! How she reached them she could never tell! Her first memory was of kneeling on the floor of the poor bare chamber, sobbing on Hope's lap, and seeing Michael, pale and emaciated, bolstered up in bed, with the marriage certificate in his hand, looking at her with hollow despairing eyes.

"O Terese, Terese!" he cried, "I have lost you at last!"

But she took his hand in her own, and pressed it to her forehead and her lips. Her holy eyes filled with unspeakable tenderness.

"Ah no!" she answered him, "my own—my dearest love!"

That evening, in obedience to a summons duly sent them—for Terese would not wait—the carriage of Raoul and Ransom drove swiftly up to Mrs. Pinchin's door. Michael's sick room was turned into a chamber of consultation, and by morning the

story was abroad. Old wrongs at last were righted! The daughter of Agnes Hollingsford stood in the halls of her fathers, nursing, in the new atmosphere of their luxury, her new-made husband back to health and strength once more. No longer a "beggar"

was she, and Colonel Hollingsford stood afar off, gnashing his teeth in fruitless rage, and looking on the glory that was his no more. And Hope—dear little Hope—she had cast her bread upon the waters, and it had returned to her.

IT'S AN ILL WIND THAT BLOWS NOBODY GOOD.

An Incident of the California Panic.

BY ANNA MMORRIS.

It was the never-to-be-forgotten 26th of August, and all that long weary day I had been sitting at the open window of my room, or pacing restlessly up and down its narrow limits. As it was my vacation, I was not "due" at my desk, and I was too much disgusted with my fellow-creatures to seek their companionship.

Twice had my sympathizing landlady knocked at my door, with a gentle intimation that dinner was ready, and twice had I growled out, "I don't want any dinner—do leave me alone!"

"Poor dear Mr. Foster!" I heard her sigh to the chambermaid, as she beat a retreat the second time. "I am afraid he has something on his mind!"

Something on my mind! I should think I had! Wouldn't any man have something on his mind, who had been treated as I had been!

Only two weeks ago, and I would have taken my oath that I was the happiest fellow in all California. Hadn't Nellie Jameson—bless her sweet face—just owned that she loved me, after having driven me nearly wild by her flirtations with other men; and hadn't I rushed off and purchased there and then, the prettiest little house on Russian Hill, which I had happened to see a day or two before? It was nearly new, and very neatly furnished. Its owner was about moving to the East, and I got the whole establishment at a very moderate price, which the savings of my salary enabled me to pay. Again and again I explored every nook and corner with the most rapturous delight, fancying how cheerful the little parlor would look when graced by Nellie's presence; then wandering off to the kitchen, and endeavoring to determine whether there was every convenience there, as the owner had assured me, or whether I had better hasten to the nearest hardware store, and order a few cartloads of pots and pans. On the whole, I decided to wait till Nellie should inspect it with me, which I had made up my mind would be as soon as her father returned.

She was an only child, and Mr. Jameson was a widower. He had been away on business for some weeks now, and did not know of the precise condition of affairs between us, but that gave me little uneasiness. He had always been very friendly, invited me frequently to his house, and never objected to Nellie's walking or riding with me; in short, had behaved, I thought, as a father-in-law elect should do.

"Yes, I suppose so," Nellie said, when I made this remark, in answer to her "wonder what papa would say,"—"only, Harry, don't you remember you said yourself that you did not see why he brought Mr. Selby here so often, and—"

"And as soon as I can talk to your father he shall come no more," I interrupted. "I do not like the man, and I don't believe the fine stories he tells of his great wealth. But never mind him now, Nellie," I added, "I don't like to see you look so sad. Come and sing me one more song, and then I must say good-night."

And she had sung, and the days had gone blissfully by, until about the twentieth of August, when Mr. Jameson had returned. I was at his house when he arrived, and at once made known all my hopes and plans.

To my surprise, he asked, "What property have you, Mr. Foster?"

Now, he knew as well as I did, that I was head clerk in a large establishment, and had a good salary, with strong hopes of soon becoming a member of the firm, for the senior partner was an old friend of Mr. Jameson, and had told me that he had made particular inquiries as to my position. I had thought that all right, seeing, as he must, my intentions in regard to Nellie, but supposing he thought me ignorant of his having the information. I explained briefly what my prospects were, and impatiently awaited his answer.

It was not long in coming. Leaning back in his chair, and slowly twisting his heavy watchchain as he spoke. "I am deeply grieved, Mr. Foster," he began, in sarcastic tones, "to be obliged to decline your highly

flattering offer, but the truth is, I look higher for my daughter. Parents are apt to be ambitious for their children, you know; so perhaps I may be pardoned for hoping that Nellie will make a wealthy match. I had supposed that your own good sense would teach you this, and though I was always pleased to see you as a friend, I must beg you to distinctly understand that anything of this sort is entirely impossible."

I bowed, and left the room without a word. Some other time I might argue the matter with him, but if I stayed another minute then, I knew I should choke him; and as he was Nellie's father, that would not answer.

In the hall I met Nellie, who saw in a moment that something was wrong, and slipping her dear little hand into mine, drew me out of the door, and down into a shaded summer-house in the garden, where we could be secure from interruptions, before she asked:

"What is it, Harry?"

I told her as quietly as I could, longing all the while to snatch her up, and carry her off where her father would never see her again.

"I was afraid he would not consent," she said, sadly. "I am convinced he intends me to marry Mr. Selby, if he asks me; indeed, I think there is some understanding on the subject between them, but I will promise you solemnly that I will marry no one but you. Perhaps, when papa sees how much I care for you, he will relent. He is very fond of me, and generally ends by letting me have my own way, though he may scold for a while."

So with many promises to be faithful we parted, my only consolation as I slowly returned to my lodgings being that I had not mentioned the dear little house on Russian Hill to Nellie. I had refrained from telling her of my purchase, intending it as a delightful surprise, as soon as her father had given his consent, and I was now very glad that I had done so. "It would only have added to her sorrow," I reflected, as I found how hard it was to give up all my own bright dreams connected with it.

Now, the question was, what should be done with the house? I could not bear the thought of letting or selling it, and finally determined to let it remain as it was for the present. If I found I could in no way change Mr. Jameson's feelings toward me, I would sell it, and leave San Francisco.

In the meantime, what should I do with myself? It was, as I said, my vacation. I had declined several invitations to join my friends in their summer excursions, preferring to remain near Nellie. Now almost all whom I knew were out of town, and being in no state of mind to join them, I shut myself up in my room, and moodily pondered on ways and means of winning Mr. Jameson's favor.

It was on the evening of the twenty-fifth that I received a little broken-hearted note from Nellie, saying that her father had brought home Mr. Selby, and introduced him to her as her future husband, and upon her appeal to him not to sacrifice her, he had sworn that she should be married the very next evening, and be out of my reach. Mr. Selby, when she implored him to withdraw his suit, saying she had no love to give him, had coolly replied that he would be satisfied with her esteem—endeavor to be worthy of it, etc., etc.

Nellie concluded by saying that she had resolved to leave home; she would not tell me how or where she was going, lest I should be accused of having persuaded her to take this step, but would let me hear from her again as soon as possible. "I shall wait till to-morrow afternoon," she added, "in the hope that papa may yet yield."

I knew well enough where she would go, to an uncle and aunt who lived a few miles from the city, and who had been the kindest friends to her since her mother's death. I believed that they would protect her as far as possible, but how much that would be I could not determine. They were poor, and consequently not held in much esteem by Mr. Jameson.

I also knew the secret of Mr. Selby's influence over Mr. Jameson. He had not been long in San Francisco, lived in great style, drove splendid horses, and talked loudly of his wealth. Such a man was the very one to impress Mr. Jameson, who, having begun life as a poor boy, and earned his fortune by his own exertions, now made money his god, and was ready to bow down and worship any one who possessed it. There had been various discreditable stories afloat in regard to Selby, but nothing positive enough to convince Mr. Jameson.

So this was my position on the afternoon of the twenty-sixth. Little wonder that my good landlady concluded that I had something on my mind!

Suddenly the doorbell rang a furious peal; quick steps were heard on the stairs, and a loud rap sounded on my door.

"Let me in, Harry," cried a familiar voice, and as I turned the key, in rushed Dick Halsted.

"How can you stay here?" he exclaimed, "when the whole city is in such excitement! Haven't you heard?" he went on, in answer to my look of inquiry. "Why, man, the Bank of California has stopped payment! It is said that there is an official announcement that it will not go on at all, and if that is the case, half the firms in the city will fail. Come out, and hear for yourself?"

I seized my hat, and dashed down stairs, conscious of only one thought. If the Bank of California had failed, Mr. Jameson was ruined, as his entire fortune was invested in the mining stocks controlled by the bank, which of course would now sink to a mere cipher, and what effect would this have on Selby?

The city was, as Dick had said, in great excitement. California Street was filled with a dense crowd on either side of the bank. Every emotion was depicted in the countenances by which we were surrounded, from idle curiosity to perfect agony. We had pushed through the crowd nearly to the bank, when I saw a man come reeling along, as though almost unable to walk. In an instant I perceived that it was Mr. Jameson. Fearful of repulse, if I offered the assistance he so evidently required, and yet unwilling, for Nellie's sake, to let him pass unaided, I hesitated for a moment what course to pursue, when to my relief I saw that he was making for Selby, who stood near.

"All the better," thought I, the bitter feelings all returning at sight of the two. "I want nothing to do with either," and was passing along with Dick, when a sudden exclamation fell upon my ear. It was from Mr. Jameson, who, unheeding me, or the crowd, was talking earnestly to Selby.

"All gone!" he was saying. "I tell you, Selby, the property it has taken me a lifetime to accumulate, will all be gone, if this is true."

I glanced at Selby. His face grew white. "Well, sir," he said, coldly. "I sincerely regret your ill-fortune," and turned to depart without another word.

"Don't go, Selby!" exclaimed Mr. Jame-

son, seizing him by the arm. "Come home with me, and talk matters over. Why, I had nearly forgotten! It is your wedding day! Come home, and we'll send for the parson, and have that job done up right! No failure there, eh?" he added, with a feeble attempt at a jest.

But Selby drew his arm away. "Excuse me, Mr. Jameson," he said, almost insolently. "Circumstances will not permit—that is, in your reverses, you will undoubtedly require your daughter's presence—sorry to deprive you—I have an unexpected call away from the city;" and he turned to go.

I believe I should have knocked the fellow's brains out, in my mingled rage and joy, had not Dick restrained me.

"Let him alone," he whispered; "we shall have enough to do to take care of Mr. Jameson."

We had, indeed! Mr. Jameson would have fallen to the ground, had not the crowd been so great as to prevent him, but he was entirely insensible, and continued so till we had extricated him with much difficulty, and placed him in a carriage. I feared apoplexy, but Dick, who was somewhat of a doctor, brought him round all right. As his recollection returned, he seemed quite overcome on finding that I was taking care of him.

"This is returning good for evil, indeed," he said, with a ghastly smile. "Perhaps you do not know, Mr. Foster, that the bank failure will ruin me."

"I heard you tell Mr. Selby so," I returned, quietly, at once perceiving his meaning; "and was very sorry, for your sake, that such was the case."

"Perhaps," he continued, with the same suspicious look and tone, "you would not be so anxious now to marry Nellie."

"On the contrary," I answered, "I am more than ever anxious to do so."

"But I shall not have even a roof left to shelter me," he argued; "and then what would become of you?" These words seemed to place his loss so vividly before him, that he quite broke down, and rocked helplessly back and forth moaning, "Not even a roof to shelter me."

I placed my hand on his shoulder to rouse him. "Listen to me, Mr. Jameson," I said. "I have a home, which I prepared when I thought to gain your consent to my marriage with Nellie. It is not grand and luxurious like yours, but neat and comfort-

able. Let me marry Nellie, and her home shall be yours. I have enough to support us all, and will most gladly do so. You have seen for yourself how much Selby is to be depended upon."

"I can tell you plenty about him," put in Dick, drawing some letters from his pocket. "Finding he was likely to be in your way, Harry, I wrote to some friends of mine, whose names I had heard him mention, and the replies came to-day. You will see there is full proof of his being a swindler and gambler, and not much doubt that he is a forger."

Mr. Jameson read the letters in silence, and when he had finished, exclaimed in a voice so unlike the pompous tones in which he generally spoke that I scarce recognized it:

"I believe it all! He would have married poor Nellie for her fortune! The villain! and now that it is gone he deserts her! As for you, Foster," he continued, "I beg your pardon, and thank you for all your kind words. You shall have my daughter as soon as you choose."

"This very evening, then," I interrupted, and rising hastily, gave orders to the hackman to drive as rapidly as possible to the residence of Rev. Mr. Smith.

"What do you want with him?" exclaimed both my companions in amazement.

"To tie the knot at once!" I returned, jestingly, though in truth, I began to feel much alarmed lest Nellie should have departed before we reached her home, and was secretly determined if such was the

case, to pursue her to her uncle's and marry her there, lest more favorable accounts of the bank's condition might bring a change in Mr. Jameson's feelings—possibly a reconciliation between him and Selby.

Fortunately, however, the clergyman was at home, and accompanied us without delay to Mr. Jameson's residence, where we found Nellie, though she privately informed me that she had her hat on to depart, when we drove up.

It did not take long to reconcile her to the change of bridegrooms, or induce her to consent to my wish for an immediate union; so an hour or two later, I had the satisfaction of exhibiting my little home to my wife and her father.

Nellie was in raptures—declaring it a thousand times more beautiful than her father's great house, with all its showily furnished apartments. Wonderful to relate, her father agreed to all she said, and although, as I foresaw, his losses are not as great as he anticipated, and he might easily retain his own establishment, he much prefers disposing of it, and remaining with us, and he is so agreeable, that Nellie and I prefer it also.

Mr. Selby made some overtures for a reconciliation, but the coldness with which they were met, and the astonishing intelligence that Nellie was already married, effectually quenched him.

We all sincerely regret the loss and sorrow occasioned by the panic, but nevertheless, as Dick observes, "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good."

JASON CARSON.

BY BLANCHE SHAW.

JASON CARSON sat at his lonely breakfast-table, abstractly fingering a piece of toast. It was not because there was anything wrong in the preparation of this article of diet that he delayed to taste it. O no! Peter Fukin had not been preceded by father, grandfather and great-grandfather in the *cuisine* service without learning the exact shade of brown to which toast should be brought before presenting it to the palate. No: it was not Peter's cooking, but his tongue, that had so effectually interfered with his master's appetite. And why? Listen to the following and learn.

"Are you sure, Peter, that there is no mistake about this?"

"Certain, sir. Smith's boy told me; Smith has charge of the place."

"Yes, I know he has."

Peter, after a moment's silence, to give his master a chance to say more:

"Smith's boy said it was a widow, with a troop of servants, a maid all flounces and ribbons, and—a little boy."

Jason crushed an egg, and groaned; and well he might, for in those two last words he heard the deathknell of his future peace and comfort. A bachelor, and woman hater of the sternest mould—so much so, that no female foot ever crossed his threshold, every domestic duty being performed by the equally anti-feminine Peter. Jason had

lived among his books and flowers for nearly a score of years, never dreaming that his paradise could be invaded by any one's being crazy enough to take the tumble-down cottage next door. Fond foolish humanity! Here, in the twinkling of an eye, lay his castle in the dust, levelled by the puny hand of a woman and the weaker one of a child. He groaned aloud, as visions of trampled tulip beds, ravished rosebushes and murdered violets rose before him; for, alas! poor Jason could not even close his gates and remain "monarch of all he surveyed" within his walls. He must, because of a contract made by some demented ancestor, permit free passage across his grounds to the dell beyond, where bubbled a spring of fabled coolness and sweetness. Poor unhappy ancestor! Jason anathematized his memory, and "spit upon his grave." But that was all he could do. The law stood changeless as those of the Medes and Persians.

Jason rose from the table; but instead of going into the garden, as was his custom, he retired to the library, the windows of which commanded a view of his neighbor. All day he covertly watched the camp, but saw no signs of danger, except once, when he caught for a second the flutter of a ribbon, that must have been on the head of the maid who had aroused Peter's scornful indignation. This was all; and when the sun went down on the first day, he scarcely knew whether he felt disappointed or relieved.

He rose, of course, the next morning, but not before, or even with the lark; for Jason lived for comfort, and he was thoroughly convinced that there was more of it to be found in a morning nap than all the sunrises the poets have ever sung of. The sun was well up when Peter set his toast and eggs before him. His appetite was good, and he prepared to do them justice, when a sight met his eyes that made him forget such things were ever made. Right in the middle of his favorite tulip bed stood a small animal of human shape. In one hand it held a hat, full to overflowing with gorgeous flowers, and in the other a stick, with which he was testing the soil and examining the roots in the bed. For a second Jason sat motionless and dumb; then his rage broke out in a terrible threat, and he rushed, minus hat, in his dressing-gown and slippers out into the garden. The child was so

intent on his employment that he did not perceive his approaching danger, till Jason seized his shoulder, and shaking him savagely, said:

"You miserable little wretch! You vile little fiend! How dare you! I'll teach you! I'll—"

"O! O sir! I beg pardon! I am so sorry!" was here wafted to his ears, like the notes of a silver flute. He still held the child, but looked up and saw, coming through the gate, something he first thought was an angel; but afterwards remembered that such things did not wear garden hats and white wrappers tied with blue ribbons. The vision advanced to him, and continued:

"I beg a thousand pardons, sir! I hope he has done no damage. Willie, Willie! How could you be so naughty?"

Jason released the boy, who had begun to cry, and he was about to protest that not the slightest harm was done, when his good angel saved his veracity, and he stammered:

"I—I don't think he has done much damage." And then becoming more himself, "It is terribly trying, though. That tulip bed was the gem of the garden."

"It certainly is very beautiful, as is your whole garden. I have admired it ever since my arrival. And to think that Willie should have done so much harm! Willie, Willie! Mamma is very much ashamed of you. Permit me once more to apologize. I promise you shall not be annoyed again."

"Not at all! not at all!" replied Jason, getting lost again, and feeling for his hat, in absence of which he seized a lock of hair. "Don't mention it. I assure you it is a pleasure—I—" But fate saved him from further absurdities. The lady, with a bewitching "good-morning," had passed through the gate.

Jason watched her till the last flutter of her dress vanished, and then, feeling—he couldn't begin to tell how—he wrapped his dressing-gown around him and went slowly back to look at his breakfast. He did this so literally and abstractly that Peter was alarmed, and asked, when he removed the untouched repast, if Mr. Carson was well that morning.

"O, don't mention it! Thank you! Perfectly!" was the incoherent reply. And he left the table, to further astonish and appall Peter by appearing a few minutes later in the garden attired in his garden jacket and smoking-cap.

A week passed. Jason received no further annoyance from his neighbors. He not even caught a glimpse of the white dress, for which he watched with an eagerness only equal to the vehemence with which he would have denied the same had the charge been hinted at. He was beginning to despair under protest, when one morning, upon looking up suddenly from his work, he saw a pair of blue eyes watching him through an opening in the wall; and in a second he knew they belonged to the offender of the tulip beds. The four eyes looked at each other. Jason wanted to say something, but never having within his memory voluntarily spoken to a child, he knew no more what to say to him than he would have done to the king of the cannibal islands. Finally a happy thought struck him; gathering a bunch of his rarest flowers, he handed them to the child, and then, without a word, hurried into the house, in an agony of fear lest Peter had seen his folly. He staid in his study the rest of the day; and fancy his feelings, when towards night Peter brought him up a three-cornered bit of pink paper, which he told him, with a diabolical grin, had been given him by the beribboned maid. Jason took it as though he feared it would sting him, and proceeded to discover that it was a note from his neighbor, thanking him for his flowers, and requesting him to call. He read it through three times before he fully took in the meaning; by which time Peter, by dint of much neck-stretching, had managed to get a pretty fair idea of it too.

"Well, I never!" he ejaculated.

"Eh? Never what?" said Jason, turning sharply on him.

"Why—why—thought that dust would gather so quickly," he replied, polishing an inkstand with his thumb.

"You didn't, eh?" said his master.

"Well, just suppose you get out of this now, and put off further discoveries of the kind till to-morrow."

Peter backed out, and Jason sat down and thought; and the result of his reflections was that he appeared at dinner in his best clothes. Peter snorted, and seemed disposed to catechise; but, receiving small encouragement and many snubs, he retired on his dignity; and Jason, after scalding himself with hot tea, sneaked out of the room the first time his faithful servant's back was turned. Jason called that evening on

the widow, but of what he did, said, or had said to him, he has not the slightest idea. Up to this date he can only tell a confused story of blue ribbons, strawberries and cream, and brown hair. [N.B.—The hair wasn't in the cream.] But Peter here takes up the testimony, and is considerably clearer. He states that the next morning, before he had the china washed, he was despatched to his neighbor's with the largest basket in the house, filled to overflowing with flowers. This he was to deliver to the abomination of a maid, with his master's compliments, and the question if those flowers would be enough. He obeyed; but on his return, he sat down on the back doorstep and presided over a debate between his love for his master, and ditto his self-respect. The discussion was long, and the result a compromise. He would stand it a little longer, that is, if it went no further. If the "it" meant the basket, his conditions were complied with. The basket always went to the same place, but the distance must have grown greater, for each day the errand took longer; and one evening Peter was actually obliged to call over the backyard fence to the maid, to talk of something he had forgotten in the morning.

And so things progressed, until summer faded to autumn, and haughty dahlias towered above the modest pansies; and one day, when Jason carried his first crimson offering to his neighbor, he found her with as sweet a smile as ever, but a pathetic redness around the eyes. Jason was practical and material. His first thought was influenza, and he gave it utterance; but with a rending sigh she said:

"No; worse than that."

"Worse!" ejaculated Jason. "Not infectious, I hope?"

"Alas! I fear not."

Jason jumped higher than before.

"Fear not! Madam, you astonish and alarm me. Tell me plainly. What is it?"

"Why—why—I must go away from here next week."

The long lashes fell on her cheeks, and Jason thought he saw something shine beneath them; he wasn't sure, though, he felt so mighty queer himself.

"Going away!" he faltered; "Why—where—how?"

"Because the house is sold; where, I do not know—or care!"

No mistake about the shine now; it fell

on the floor. What happened after this is as lost to Jason as his first call; but when he came to himself his arm was around her, and she was cooing, "Dear Jason" in tones he thought came right from the angel choir.

Peter's disgust when he learned he was

to have a mistress can be imagined. He at once "gave warning," and went to his old enemy for consolation. She performed her work so well, that before his time was up he had retracted, and they decided to enter the service together.

JENNY'S POCKET.

BY AUGUST BELL.

JENNY sat by the parlor window sewing on her Marguerite dress for Mrs. Deckhoven's fancy costume party. It was the best thing she could do. Her aunt lent her the blue quilted silk petticoat, and her own old fawn-colored street dress was just the thing to rip up and make over for the outside skirt, caught up German peasant fashion. The whole costume would not cost her a penny, and that was a very important thing in her aunt's eyes. It would be becoming, too, and that was an important thing in Jenny's eyes, for—well, of course you know Fred Deckhoven would naturally be at the party, and that was enough to set more than one girlish heart in a flutter.

"Neil Birney is going to hire a dress from the theatre," said Jenny, half to herself and half to her aunt who was trimming a thrifty heliotrope at another window; "and Clara Day is having a beautiful Marie Antoinette costume made outright at Madame Follett's."

"Ridiculous!" exclaimed Aunt Baker. "Are their fathers nabobs? Jenny, child, who is that going by on the sidewalk?"

"Fred Deckhoven!" said Jenny, in a low voice, as she pushed her dress down on the floor that he might not see it, as he glanced round at her window and politely bowed. *Had* he seen it? She could not tell, and she took it up again with half a sigh after he passed, wondering if he would think it pretty, after all.

The dress was almost done by dark, but Jenny was not satisfied with it. Some new touch was needed to make it perfect. And then she tried for the hundredth time to recall a painting of Marguerite that she had once seen at exhibition.

"A pocket! a pocket!" she exclaimed at last; "a little hanging pocket of blue silk! That is just the thing." And immediately her deft fingers went to work fashioning the tiny blue silk affair which was to swing at her side.

"It looks like a three-cornered bag!" sniffed Aunt Baker. "You can't even put a pocket-handkerchief in it."

Jenny laughed, and laid the pocket carefully away along with the prayer-book and

rosary that she had borrowed of Bridget the kitchen girl, for of course Marguerite must have a prayer-book and rosary. The great evening came, and Mrs. Deckhoven's house was lighted from top to bottom, and cloaked figures in masks and dominos entered from moment to moment and ran lightly up stairs to the dressing-rooms.

"Do put on your domino, Fred," said Mrs. Deckhoven to a handsome young Faun who stood in the library waiting for the guests to assemble; "and let me whisper a secret in your ear. Clara Day will be dressed as Marie Antoinette! So now do remember all our wishes, and don't let those two little flirts, Nell Birney and Jenny Sanders, absorb all your attention."

The Faun laughed lightly, and replaced his wood-brown domino in time to escape recognition from the merry maskers who came trooping in. A "nut-brown maid" who came tripping his way seized his arm and led him off for a promenade. Folly flew laughing by, kings, and queens, and harlequins began flirtations in the corners, and a quadrille was made up almost entirely of nuns, and Quakers, and friars. Marie Antoinette soon gathered a little group of admirers, and the Faun, disengaging himself from the coquettish nut-brown maiden, stood for a few moments watching her.

"She is all pink satin and city style," was his mental comment. "But what I want to see is a certain blue and fawn-colored costume. Can it be I made a mistake when I thought it was for the party?"

Just then Marguerite came gliding shyly into the room with downcast eyes, holding her rosary and prayer-book.

"Just the sweetest, prettiest masker in the room!" thought Fred, following her with his eyes. "But confound it, I can't join her here right under Aunt Ellen's stern glances. I'll manage it somehow before long, though."

And he slipped away into the library to write a tiny three-cornered note to slip into Marguerite's hand as soon as fortune favored him with a chance.

Meanwhile, little Bertie Deckhoven, the petted eight-year-old son of the hostess, dis-

guised as a page in a pretty green velvet suit, was roaming about the rooms, looking for his favorite friend, Jenny Sanders. She gave him lessons sometimes when he was well enough to study, and after lessons she always told him stories; so of course he loved her dearly.

"Are you my Jenny Sanders?" he asked, pulling the sleeve of the graceful nut-brown maid.

"No, I'm not!" she answered, scornfully. "Be off, you little tease!"

"I might have known by the hair," said the discomfited child; "yours is coarse and dark, and my Jenny's is fine and yellow. I'll just look for yellow hair now."

And so in the course of time it fell out that Marguerite, standing pensively in a recessed window almost hid by the curtain, found a little hand sliding into hers, and then the childish voice asked:

"Aren't *you* my Jenny Sanders? I'm so tired looking."

"Yes, Bertie darling," she whispered, kissing him, "I'm Jenny; but don't tell anybody; and I can't let you stay here talking to me, for fear folks will guess."

But Bertie had a cherished plan to accomplish. Deep in his tiny pockets were some candies which he had snatched from the supper-table, and had been saving all this while for his Jenny Sanders. His little hand was tugging to get them out, while Jenny, looking over his head, was watching that handsome Faun threading his way through the crowd, wondering whether he was coming towards her corner. Yes, he certainly was!

"Bertie, Bertie!" she hurriedly whispered, "run right away this minute, darling; for if any one sees you with me they will know in an instant who I am. Hurry, Bertie!"

The little fellow had just succeeded in getting out from his pocket two chocolate creams, and one sugar plum wrapped up in fringed paper with a motto. Seeing Jenny's little blue peasant pocket hanging at her side, he slipped them into it at once, without her noticing in the least what he was about, and then away he ran into the crowd again, just as his cousin Fred sauntered up to the trembling Marguerite.

"Marguerite!" he whispered, in a thrilling voice, "have you stolen away here for your devotions? Forget your rosary and book a little while and talk to me."

Jenny would have consented gladly, but her quick eyes saw the nut-brown maid and Marie Antoinette detaching themselves from the gay throng and coming directly towards the window.

"I cannot," she said, softly; "we shall not be alone."

Fred was prepared for this emergency, and had his little note all ready in his hand. That, at least, should speak for him. He thrust it into the little swinging blue pocket, and whispered as he did so:

"Read my heart in that!"

"Well, well!" exclaimed the nut-brown maid in Nell Birney's unmistakable mocking voice. "Pray what temptation are you offering now, Sir Faun, to poor Marguerite? Is it jewels and a mirror?"

"Nothing but bonbons," he said, laughing. "Sorry I've no more left; but come with me, fair ladies, and I will find sweets for you, too."

He offered each an arm, and gayly whirled them away, knowing that otherwise they would remain to tease Jenny. But she, poor child, felt disappointed because he went.

"Nothing but bonbons" she repeated, wonderingly; and putting her hand into the little blue pocket which had proved itself so useful, she drew out Bertie's candies, entirely missing the little three-cornered note.

"I don't see what he meant," she thought, feeling very much mystified; and then it occurred to her that there was a motto with the sugar plum. How stupid in her not to think of it before!

She hastily untwisted the fringed paper and unwound the little printed slip inside, only to read these words:

"I know you love me, sweet coquette,

Nay, do not fear to own it,

Since blushing cheek and tender glance

Have all too plainly shown it."

Jenny's face flushed indignantly behind her little blue domino mask, and a sharp pain shot through her heart. How unkind and rude it was in him to give her such a motto, and how forward and unmaidenly she must have seemed to him if she had really given him any occasion for such an insult!

"I'm sure I never gave him a 'tender glance,'" she thought, resentfully. "I always tried to look at him as if he wasn't any different from our old frowzy Dr.

Graves. But I shall hate him now, I know I shall, and I won't stay here a moment longer to be treated so!"

So poor little Marguerite slipped quietly out of the great brilliant parlors, and made her way up to the dressing-room again, where the gas burned low and the chairs were strewn with hoods and wraps. No one was there, and she was glad of that, for the tears were crowding into her eyes and she felt so heartbroken that she did not want to speak to any one, but just to creep into some little corner and hide away in sorrow and mortification. She laid her head down on a great heap of shawls, crying softly to herself, and wished the music and merriment were not so loud down stairs, it jarred on her so to hear them.

Up the stairs swept the stately Mrs. Deckhoven with a lady guest whose dress of lace had been torn in the crowded dance.

"There are pins here on the dressing-table," said the hostess, as she entered the room and turned on the gas.

Jenny buried her head deeper among the shawls, and as she was on the farther side of the room, and almost hidden by a chair, she remained unseen.

"Thanks," said the lady, as Mrs. Deckhoven assisted her in pinning up the dress. "It is really not of the slightest consequence, only one doesn't want to be tripped up. What a lovely party this is, Mrs. Deckhoven! such a perfect success! Do tell me, isn't that handsome Faun your husband's nephew?"

"Yes, it is Frederic," replied Mrs. Deckhoven. "Really, I think I had better use a needle here."

"O no, it is of no consequence. Wasn't that Clara Day who was leaning on his arm so confidently when we met them in the hall? I thought I recognized her sloping shoulders."

"Yes, it was Clara. Do you know I have really reason to believe that may be a match yet?" said Mrs. Deckhoven, as she fastened the last pin.

"Ah! I thought at one time it might be Nell Birney."

"O, there was nothing in that; Fred is a sad flirt," was the complacent reply, as the two ladies went out of the room together.

Alas, poor little Jenny Sanders! She cowered on the floor in her Marguerite dress until she was sure they must have passed down the stairs, and then she came

slowly across the room and stood before the mirror. What a pale tearful face it was reflected there, so changed from the bright, pretty, hopeful Marguerite who had beheld herself with a happy smile only two hours before!

"Nobody shall see me looking like this!" thought Jenny, with rising pride. "I hate Fred Deckhoven, and I am going to put on my things and go straight home, without waiting for Aunt Baker to send for me."

Fred Deckhoven, terribly weary of his tete-a-tete with Clara Day, was letting his glances wander from her as much as politeness would allow, when he saw a slim little figure, enveloped from head to foot in a dark waterproof, stealing quietly down the stairs and going out at the front door.

"How much that looks like Jenny!" he thought; and was very glad when a moment after another gentleman joined Miss Day, and he was relieved from service. He went up and down through the parlors, looking carefully in every direction, but Jenny was nowhere to be seen.

"Do you know where Miss Sanders is, Bertie?" he asked, as he suddenly came across his little nephew curled up disconsolately against a sofa pillow.

"No, I don't," said Bertie. "I did find her once, and gave her some of my candies, and then she told me to run away when she saw you coming. And pretty soon after that she went up stairs. I do wish she would come back!"

"Very strange," thought Fred Deckhoven, as he strode moodily away. "Have I made a fool of myself, and is she trying to shun me?"

Meanwhile, Jenny Sanders was walking swiftly around the corner to her aunt's house, and as soon as she gained it she went directly to her own room and locked herself in. Then she passionately tore off the pretty fawn and blue costume that had cost her so much pains, and tossed it in a heap on her closet floor, pocket and all. After that she sat down and cried.

The next day she passed Fred Deckhoven on the street with the slightest possible recognition.

"He can't call *that* a 'tender glance'!" she said to herself, as she walked resolutely on, though she was conscious that he paused and was looking after her.

He did not call to see her after that, nor did he write her any more three-cornered

notes; but she heard of his taking Clara Day to a concert, and one afternoon she saw him driving past in a carriage with Nell Birney. Then Mrs. Deckhoven sent her word that Bertie was ill and could take no more lessons; so in one way and another all her acquaintance with the family seemed likely to end.

She went singing about the house as usual, but she grew pale, and her mouth lost its pretty trick of smiling at every word and trifle. Aunt Baker said she looked peaked, and wondered why she didn't want to go to parties any more.

One day Nell Birney ran in to call, and brought all the latest news and gossip, as usual. She had something great to tell about herself this time, namely, her engagement to her cousin Charley Pierce.

"Nobody even guessed it beforehand" she said, triumphantly, "for I flirted with everybody else, and hardly ever spoke to Charley in public; but I liked him best all the time. I wonder whose turn will come next? Clara Day's, perhaps, for we all know she is in love with Fred Deckhoven; but I must say I don't see any great signs of devotion in Fred. Jenny, why don't you ever go anywhere any more? People will forget all about you if you don't look out. Now, there's that great party at Mrs. Blake's to-night, and I know you're invited. Why don't you go?"

"O, I don't care to," said Jenny, as carelessly as she could.

"It will be splendid, of course. Clara Day has a perfectly lovely new turquoise silk to wear. And that reminds me, Jenny, I want the pattern of that fascinating little blue silk pocket you wore with your dress at Mrs. Deckhoven's costume party."

"I haven't any pattern, but you can cut one by the pocket itself," said Jenny, starting from her chair at once to get it, glad of an excuse to leave the room for a moment, it was so hard to sit still and hear about happy engagements and Clara Day's lovely dresses.

The blue silk pocket lay still in the bottom of the closet. Jenny had never touched it since that night. But now she took it up and slowly carried it down to Nell.

"O how pretty! I can cut the pattern in a moment," said Nell. "Can you give me a piece of newspaper? Thanks! I will lay it right here on the table. May I see what you lined it with, Jenny? Why, here is some-

thing inside—the funniest little three-cornered note, I do declare!"

Jenny looked up in startled surprise and caught the note from Nell's hands. What could it be? She could not wait an instant, but tore it open, and found this inside:

"JENNY, DARLING,—Can't you come into the library by-and-by? There is something I have set my heart on saying to you to-night—something I want to ask of you.

"In suspense, FRED."

Nell was watching Jenny as she read, and noted the swift joyous blush that overspread her face, and then the pallor that succeeded it. She knew she would discover nothing by seeming too curious, but she was sure there was a mystery there worth fathoming. She was almost sure, too, that it was Fred Deckhoven's handwriting on that paper.

She cut her pattern, said good-by, and went home with all her active mind on the alert.

That evening at Mrs. Blake's party, as Fred Deckhoven was languidly threading his way through the crowd, he saw Nell Birney just before him, and stopped to congratulate her on her engagement. She detained him with some merily speech, and then said, lightly:

"Don't you admire my pretty lace pocket, Mr. Deckhoven? I cut it to-day by Jenny Sanders's, the one she wore with her Marguerite dress, you know. And such a funny thing happened! There was a three-cornered note in her pocket that she had never even seen before. It must have lain there ever since the costume party. I wish somebody would put a note in *my* pocket, if it would make me look as happy as hers made her. Poor thing! she's looked sad enough lately, anyhow."

Fred Deckhoven lost all his languor. He looked electrified.

"Thank you, Nell Birney!" he said. "I don't believe you have ever done a better thing in all your life than this. Good-night, I'm going."

"What's all that?" asked Clara Day, floating up in her rosy tulle just in time to hear the last words and to see Fred vanish.

"Why, Mr. Deckhoven remembered a call he had to make," said Nell, coolly. "How impulsive he is! I don't believe he has even stopped to excuse himself to Mrs. Blake."

Jenny Sanders sat alone in her aunt's quiet parlor. Her face was in her hands, she had so much that was sweet, so much that was hopeless to think of. She heard the doorbell without any interest; nobody but the postman ever came. But that step in the hall! She started up, and there was Fred Deckhoven, he was clasping her in his arms, and it was all real and no dream!

Love's course never runs smooth, but in this case, the troubles were now all past, and Nell Birney had not long to wonder whose turn would come next to be engaged. And the blue silk pocket? Well, that hangs in Mr. and Mrs. Deckhoven's sanctum, and will hang there, I suppose, as long as it holds together.

LEONIE DE ARMAND.
A STORY OF OLD VIRGINIA.

BY ADA L. FLETCHER.

CHAPTER I.

"CARLTON, my son!"

He was very busy at his writing-desk, but with the quick deference to my slightest wish he has always shown, he left his work and came quickly to my side.

"What is it, mother mine?" with the handsome head almost touching my shoulder.

"Your eyes are clearer than mine, dear—will you read this letter Henry has just brought me?"

He took it from me, and, with one arm about me, knelt before the glowing fire, and read with ease what had been but a blur of ink to my failing sight.

"Dear, dear Helen," were the first words of the letter, and my heart gave a great bound as I wondered what one of my girlhood friends yet lived to call me Helen, but I listened in silence. "You will no doubt be greatly surprised when you see this, but my old trust in you has not wavered through all these years, and I *know* you will receive and read it kindly for the sake of her you once loved, and who loved you so dearly—your playmate, schoolmate and friend—poor Laura Lee; who, lying here in this far-off Spanish land, knowing that death is very near, can think of no one to whom she would rather trust her orphan child than to you, whose true fond heart she knows so well. Yes, Helen, I am dying—dying alone, with my husband's grave before my eyes, and a pair of clinging childish arms about my neck. Will you take her, Helen? I cannot write more—the letters swim before my eyes—O—" And here the wavering lines ceased, and my tears were falling fast, for I knew that Laura had died before the feeble hand could trace another word. But the letter was finished by a coarser manly hand, Carlton said, and told us that by papers found among poor Laura's effects, it was found that she had willed her child, who had no near relatives living, to me. "And in accordance with her wishes," wrote the lawyer, "we will send the child by the next steamer to New York city, in trusty hands. Madame De Armand

was, as you know, of immense wealth, and her child is therefore an heiress. Madame Girard will find the child in the care of Follen and Co., in New York, where her American fortune is invested."

And that was all. With a quick movement Carlton sprang to his feet and commenced a rapid walk back and forth through the room, sure evidence with him of distress and trouble; while I, leaning my head upon my hand, while my tears fell fast and thick, went back in memory to the halcyon days of my girlhood, when there was no friend dearer to my heart than sweet Laura Lee. Together, as children, we had romped and played through the dim old woods of our ancestral Virginian homes; together we had grown up, each the only child of loving parents, whose object in life was but to make us happy; and together we had gone to the "Young Ladies' Boarding-School" in Richmond, where, after our two years' course was nearly ended, and we were preparing for home and society, Laura astonished and grieved her friends by an elopement with our Professor of Languages, Carlos De Armand, whose sad dark eyes and handsome foreign face had carried her young heart by storm. I was her confidante through all; and though my less romantic head wondered at the infatuation that could throw to the winds home, friends and wealth for a penniless lover, my heart was too loyal to betray its trust. And besides, I knew Carlos to be in every way, except in worldly position, worthy of the prize he had won. Her parents never forgave her. Her mother, a proud haughty woman, whose life had been centred in Laura, died soon after the elopement, I shall always believe of a broken heart; and not many years afterward Harold Lee was thrown from his horse and instantly killed, without time to make the will that was to disinherit his only child. Laura had long ere this sailed with her husband to his home in Spain, where they had lived ever since, in poverty almost, until her father's death gave into her hands his vast wealth. Before my own marriage our correspondence had been reg-

ular and frequent, but after that, as with every one, new ties claimed my love and attention, and it was only now and then that we wrote. In the quiet happiness of my married life, with my band of rosy children about me, how my heart ached for Laura, when each letter would bring the announcement either of the birth or death of her children, who were none of them spared to her beyond their second year. Ah, and how much more could and did I sympathize with her when death came beneath my roof with merciless hand, and in two short weeks made three graves in the old grass-grown churchyard, and three empty chairs about our fireside, leaving me only two, my eldest and my youngest born—my noble manly Carlton, with his father's eyes and hair, who had been my boy ten happy years, and the little one who lay in my arms, and scarce had seen as many days.

Fifteen years ago I wrote to Laura of our sad bereavement, and received in return one of her tenderest, most sympathetic letters, announcing, too, the birth of another child—"A little girl, whom, in fear and trembling, we have named for you and my husband's mother—Helen Leonie."

Two years after our letters crossed each other, telling the saddest news a woman's pen can tell, the death of our husbands; and I had not heard from Laura until tonight. These memories and many more were making my heart ache, when Carlton stopped in his rapid walk and laid his hand gently on my shoulder.

"The poor little girl, mother! We will bring her home to Girard Hall, will we not?"

"Certainly, my dear," I said. "In thinking of the mother I had forgotten the child." And then, as my boy knelt beside me again, I told him all that I have told the reader.

While we were talking and planning for poor Laura's child, a merry peal of sleigh-bells at the door warned us that Birdie and her friend had arrived, and Carlton went out to assist them. I followed to the window, for I am never as happy as when looking at my children. Mabel would not come in, but shook her head, with its burden of tawny curls, merrily at Carlton's invitation, while the great eyes glowed and a flush of color crept into the fair cheek.

"No! no! Mr. Girard," said the musical voice. "You must not tempt me! The

ponies and their mistress must be at home in fifteen minutes, or the whole Vere plantation will be in an uproar. Good-by, darling!" And with a kiss for Birdie, and one thrown to me from the tips of her fingers, a graceful bow for Carlton, she gathered up the reins in her little gloved hands, and the ponies dashed away over the frozen snow, the mistress's glowing drapery and floating plumes making the whole equipage look like some tropical bird as it was lost in the distance. Carlton, with his sister on his arm, stood looking after it, with the flush on his cheek and the gleam in his eye that told my mother heart all too plainly that my boy's first love was no longer mine—that his heart, whether she knew it or not, was in the hands of this beautiful, graceful woman, whose appellation "Queen of Hearts" was well deserved and royally worn. It was nothing more than I expected, and I should have rejoiced, for no one knew better than I what a sacrifice it was for Carlton Girard to give up his ambitious dreams of distinction and honor in his chosen profession, that of a soldier, and settle down here at Girard Hall, simply because it would have broken his mother's heart to see him go. I knew all this, and ought to have rejoiced that some recompense had come to him at last. But I could not, somehow. One reason was, that with all Mabel Vere's beauty and bewitching ways, there was something about the girl I could not like. Her manner toward me was perfect in its gentle deference and respect; my warm-hearted Birdie almost worshipped the girl, who, although several years her senior, made of the child both friend and companion; and my boy loved her. Yet I could not like her.

Well, I have rambled on in my old-womanish way, and left Carlton and Birdie standing at the door until I know my reader is weary. They *did* stand there until I called them to come in, for the twilight was falling, and the night coming on cold and windy. Then, as the marble steps were damp and cold, Carlton caught his sister in his arms, in spite of her laughing protest, and ran in with her to my fire. She was full of life, and gave us a glowing description of her ride with Mabel, who was everything that was sweet and beautiful.

I waited until she had somewhat quieted down, and to more quickly produce this most desirable state, I had taken the golden head in my lap; then I had Carlton read

her the letter I had received, and told her myself all about my friend Laura. She was very quiet while I talked, and once or twice I saw a glittering tear gather in the violet eyes; but when I finished by telling her that her brother was going to start the very next day to bring the little girl home with him, in her joyous enthusiasm she sprang up, almost upsetting my chair and me.

"O mamma! O brother! How glad, glad, glad I am! You don't know how I have wanted a sister! O, I wonder how she looks! Haven't you her mother's picture, mamma—and how old will she be?"

"O! so many questions in a breath!" said her brother, pulling her down on his knee. "Don't you want me to go right off to-night? or will you let me wait until morning? You'll be sixteen years old your next birthday, little sis, and really must be more dignified."

"Must I take Mabel for a pattern, brother mine? If you had done your duty by me, I shouldn't be sisterless now!"

He stopped the saucy mouth with a kiss, and she turned to me.

"But how old is she, mamma—don't you know?"

"Look in the escritoire there, Birdie, and hand me the packet of letters tied with blue ribbon," was my answer.

She sprang to obey me, and then with the freedom of a petted child, stood looking over my shoulder. The evening was passed reading those dear old letters, and talking about the new inmate of our quiet home.

"And she is just my age," said Birdie, when we read the letter announcing her birth. "I wonder what she calls herself—Helen or Leonie?"

"Leonie, of course, her Spanish father called her," said I.

"I am going to write her a note and tell her just how glad I shall be to have her come." And, impetuous in everything, she got her writing-desk then and there and wrote the note.

Then it was time for family prayer, and when the family servants filed in one by one into the spacious room, and my boy devoutly bent his dear head above his father's Bible and prayer-book, my heart bowed at the throne, not only in supplication for my own children, but for our orphaned Leonie. Carlton left us before dawn the next day for New York.

THE week of Carlton's absence passed all too slowly for both of us. Birdie thought or dreamed of nothing else but her "new sister," as she called Leonie; and even I, old as I am, was somewhat excited when the telegram from Carlton came—"Meet us on Tuesday at the depot." That evening Mabel was over, and Birdie told her all about Leonie, then took us both up stairs to show us the room she had been busy all the week fitting up for her. It was next her own, and both were perfect gems in their way—Birdie's all rosewood and blue, the other rosewood and crimson.

"Why crimson?" asked Mabel.

"I don't know," said Birdie, just the least bit embarrassed. "But as she is Spanish, you know, I thought she must be brunette. I do hope she is, for I am so tired of blue eyes, and Carlton does so admire dark beauty."

Embarrassed more than ever by this last unlucky speech, which was by no means flattering to our very fair visitor, Birdie stopped short; while with the faint sneer that I have often seen distort her pretty mouth when anything is said or done she does not like, Mabel said:

"I predict you will be greatly disappointed in your little Spaniard. Spanish women are not all beautiful. All I have ever seen were swarthy creatures."

Provoked out of my usual politeness, I interrupted her with:

"Leonie's mother was called the most beautiful brunette in Virginia in her day, and came of a family of beauties; while her father was the handsomest man I ever saw."

Then I left the girls together, and went down to my quiet room, to get over my unreasonable vexation. But why should Mabel Vere try to disparage a girl whom she had never seen? My heart answered me:

"Because of the overweening vanity that rules her, and will not bear the praises of any other living creature's beauty; and the greedy grasp for power, that she fears another will share with her. O, woe for my poor boy's happiness!"

When the eventful evening came, much to Birdie's chagrin a cold rain was falling, and neither of us could go to the depot; so she passed the time in walking from the fire to the window, and back again, speculating upon the probable looks and manners of the

expected one. By-and-by, when she had worn out her restlessness and sank down on the floor, with her head buried in my lap, in the sweet babyish way she had not yet overcome, something, I do not know what, led us to talking of the dear ones gone before; and thus engaged, with the storm roaring outside, we heard nothing, until Carlton opened the door of our room, with a slender figure robed in black upon his arm. Even before I had kissed my boy, I folded the child in my warm embrace. There was something very appealing in the clasp of the arms about my neck, and the little hand that put back the veil was trembling with emotion. I am an old woman, and have seen many beautiful faces in my time, but never one more radiantly beautiful than the one then disclosed to our view. I cannot describe it, but its principal charm was in the wondrous eyes, now softened with tears. Travel-worn and weary, there was no color now in the dark cheeks, but the lips were red and tremulous. When I released her she turned with a quick graceful motion to Birdie, and the two mingled their tears and caresses together. Then Carlton took me in his strong arms and carried me to my sofa, and covered my face with kisses; and when we looked up the children were gone, while up stairs we heard the soft murmur of girlish voices.

"Is she not lovely, my son?"

His face kindled.

"Wait, mother, until you see her again! There is something absolutely bewildering about the girl. I cannot make up my mind as to what she is—child or woman."

It was something strange to hear my quiet self-possessed boy talking this way, and I gave him a questioning look.

"I found her," he went on, "at one of the finest mansions on Fifth Avenue. I sent up my card to her, and, mother, she received me like a queen! Can it be she is no older than our Birdie? There was not a trace of childish awkwardness or embarrassment about her; but she was as calm and self-possessed as any woman of twenty-five. You have no idea, from her appearance this evening, how much haughty pride can lurk in her every feature. There was nothing assumed in this, either; it seemed to be her natural manner. She seemed to be studying me, and her decision must have been favorable, for when I called again she

was as different as possible—affectionate, childlike and confiding, and has been so all the journey. It cannot seem possible that she is but sixteen years of age."

"You must remember the climate, my son, and how soon these Spanish women mature. She is very beautiful, at all events," I said, ringing the bell for a servant, whom I sent to tell Miss De Armand that, as there was an hour before dinner, she had better rest before dressing. Then Carlton went to his room, and I remained alone, thinking with a strange fascination of Leonie—of the great starry black eyes, with their mystical depths—the slender swaying figure, the red tremulous mouth—so like her mother, and yet so different.

Thus the hour passed away, and I was roused by footsteps on the stairs, and the girls entered the room together. Even then I could not help exclaiming, "What a contrast!" Birdie, in her simple home dress of blue merino, with the dainty frill of lace at the white neck and slender wrists; with her golden hair falling unbound over her shoulders; and Leonie, in a dress of some soft lustreless black goods, with a diamond pin fastening the crape collar about the proud throat; and the black glossy hair wound in a massive braid about the small head. The half hour's sleep which Birdie said she had taken as sweetly as a tired child, had brought to the dark cheek a glow like that in the heart of a royal damask rose; and the lips that had trembled so were now curved in an irradiating smile, as she knelt at my side and held them up for my greeting.

"You will love me for my mother's sake," murmured the sweet voice.

"For your own as well, darling," I answered. But the little hand fluttered to my lips.

"Don't say that," she pleaded, "until you know me better, for I am not lovable at times."

"And how about *your* loving me?" I asked, playfully.

"Loving you!" she repeated. "Why, ever since I could lip my mother's name yours has gone with it, as next dearest, next best; then came my sister Birdie." And she clasped her closer.

"And am I entirely left out?" asked Carlton, who had entered the room unobserved.

She sprang up with the frank impulsiveness of a child, and gave him her hand.

"I did not know you," she said, "and had to get acquainted, you know. But you are my brother, and of course I love you, too." This last a little shyly, with a faint blush and a sudden drooping of the long lashes, that was indescribably charming.

We were all perfectly delighted with her, and all through that first evening, and the many happy days that followed, I found myself wondering how Carlton could have thought her proud and womanly. She was such a perfect child, gliding through the house and grounds, and even the negro quarters, with a swift birdlike motion, finding so many things that were new and strange, and often laughing gleefully over her own ignorance. She was very quiet, and sad, too, at times; and then she would leave Birdie and come into my room, and, with her head in Birdie's place upon my knee, talk to me for hours, with tears and sobs, of her mother, and never grew weary hearing my stories of our childhood. Then Birdie would dance into the room, with some long description of a new place in the old rambling house, where Leonie must go forthwith; and with the quick turning from grief to joy that marked her nature, her step would be as light, and her voice as merry as Birdie's own, as they flew away together.

Carlton had long superintended Birdie's education, as I, in my foolish weakness, could not bear to send her away from me to school; and after Leonie had been there a week, I told him he must take her in hand also. She smiled a little proudly, but went with him into the library, where he said he was just going "to talk to her, to find out what she knew." In a couple of hours he brought her back to my room, with a queer look on his face.

"If anybody teaches your new daughter, Mrs. Girard," he said, with the bow of a college professor, "it will not be your son! You ask my reasons? Because, forsooth, she is already beyond me. I should be pupil instead of mentor."

After she had gone he told me that what he said was strictly true; he had been astonished by her acquaintance with the arts and sciences, into which he had but "dipped," as he said. "And she is almost a perfect linguist. I expected that, from what you told me; but how came so young a girl with a better and deeper education than most of our college seniors?"

"She had been in a convent since her twelfth year, she told me," I said. "And you know their standard is much higher than that of our girls' schools, and their regimen stricter. Birdie goes wild over the ornamental part of her education, too."

"She is very lovable, too, isn't she?" he said. "She has such a warm generous disposition, with yet such a *stable* foundation for it. We cannot help loving her and being proud of her!"

There was such warmth in his tones, and so earnest a love for the girl shining in his eyes, that my heart bounded with the thought, "Perhaps he will love her *differently* after a while, and *she* will be my daughter instead of Mabel Vere." But his very next words put all such fancies to flight.

"You know where I was last night, mother?" he asked, with a blush like a girl's on his cheek. "I want to tell you, because I have never had a secret from my mother, that Mabel has promised to be my wife. Can you love her as a daughter?"

My heart was heavy as lead, but I could not bear to cloud the happiness of his face with one warning or dissenting word, and so I did all I could—stopped and kissed the broad high forehead, with a "God bless you and Mabel both, my son!" and he left me.

Then how I wept! I could hardly tell why, for certainly I *knew* nothing against the girl; but to me her very smile was false, and the ring of her voice untrue, and I trembled for my boy. Birdie was half wild with joy over the engagement, and Leonie very anxious to see her "brother's choice," she said; but I thought—I may have been mistaken—but I *thought* there was a sadder light in her eyes after this. Then when Mabel came, a few days after, for the first time, I saw the cold hauteur that Carlton had spoken of in her manner. It was like drawing a mask over the bright beauty we had been accustomed to, but she was even more beautiful in her stateliness.

"Is she not splendid?" whispered Birdie to her friend, as Leonie withdrew.

"She *is* handsome," said Mabel, carelessly. "But gracious! she has the airs of a grand duchess, at least."

Just what I expected.

CHAPTER III.

How swiftly that happy winter flew by! It was very severe, outsiders said, and the snowdrifts deeper than ever before in the memory of the "oldest inhabitants;" but we felt none of its ice and chill at Girard Hall. Leonie's coming was like the infusion of new blood into our veins, and all over the house she was life and light. Every one on the place, from Carlton down to the least "pickaninny," whose eyes she made to glisten with her gifts, as he danced to the wild music she made on her own grand piano, adored her; and Birdie even grew cold toward her favorite Mabel, because of her disparaging remarks of her sister. Mabel was with us a great deal, and I tried hard to love her as I wanted to love my son's wife, until one night toward the close of the winter. Shall I ever forget it? We had invited a few of the neighboring young folks to a small social party, just to get Leonie acquainted with them before her real debut into society, and Mabel came over early in the afternoon. The girls dressed up stairs, and came down for my inspection and Carlton's—Leonie in the pure white that became her so well, with its trimmings of rich lace that had been her mother's mother's. Birdie had dressed her hair, I knew, for it hung in heavy curls to her waist, and nestled at one side was a white rose Birdie had been nursing into beauty for weeks. Birdie was in her favorite blue silk, and the two—as one of our gallant neighbor lads had christened them, "the Ruby and the Pearl"—looked very beautiful as they stood together. Evidently Carlton thought so, as he passed an arm round each, and kissed each blooming cheek, then clasped about each slender throat his gifts—a necklace of pearls for Birdie, of rubies for Leonie. Birdie went off in raptures, kissing her brother over and over again for hers, while Leonie stood silent, the color coming and going in her oval cheeks. Then Carlton said:

"Are you going to thank me, little sister?"

"How?" she stammered. "How can I?"

"Even as your sister did," he said, laughingly. And with a sudden graceful movement, she raised her lips to his.

Just at this moment Mabel entered the room. I saw the covert sneer on her lip, and so was not unprepared for her answer when Carlton asked her, a few moments later, when, as he thought, there was no one

near but his mother, "if the little Spaniard was not beautiful?"

"Very," she said. "And very demonstrative of her affection for one who is really no relation, and whom she knows to be almost a married man."

"Mabel!" said Carlton, with a grieved look on his face, and almost sternly.

Then I saw what neither of them did—a little figure in white move away from the deep bay window, with the head bowed on the clasped hands.

From that night Leonie's manner toward Carlton changed so greatly that even Birdie noticed it. She never stood now with her hand on his shoulder, looking at book or engraving, as Birdie did, or gave him a good-night kiss with the rest, and grew even reserved and cold in his presence. He, not having the clue that I had, wondered greatly at the change, and often spoke to me about it; but feeling that I had the girl's secret in my keeping, I told him nothing, for I knew that the child, with all her ardent woman's heart, loved Carlton, not with a sister's love; and though I knew, by my boy's saddened face, that the veil of enchantment imagination had woven about his idol was gradually being torn away by her own careless hand, showing all the deformity of selfishness and vanity beneath, I knew that Carlton still loved Mabel, and was bound to her by every tie of honor, and I saw only trouble—trouble for us all. Alas, how much greater was the trouble than even I had dreamed!

The summer passed away even as the winter had done, calmly, and, to all outward appearance, happily, though my son's face grew sadder and graver, and Leonie's sad quiet hours, when she only wanted me, came more often. She never talked to me, but she knew *I knew*, and that there was sympathy in the clasp of my hand! The hours flew swiftly and joyously by. There were innumerable picnics, excursions, etc., for our young people. Leonie seemed to enjoy them all very much, and was very much admired. There was more than one of our Virginia youths whose heart was beneath the little feet of our beautiful Spaniard, but she walked lightly on, unconscious of it all.

In the midst of our festivities there came to mar them a confirmation of the vague rumors of war we had heard—a war between brothers—North and South. I remember

the first evening we thought seriously of it. It was the night of Leonie's seventeenth birthday, and I had chosen it for my girl's debut. At my request she laid aside her heavy mourning, and appeared that evening in a trailing ruby silk, with a fall of her rare old lace about it, and looked like a picture. The evening was a gay one, and I enjoyed it thoroughly from my divan in the corner. Everywhere a murmur of admiration followed my beautiful girls, who shared the belleshyp of the occasion. I noticed with a pang of keenest pain, here and there a gray uniform mingling with the silks and tarletans, and could not repress a shudder when one of these gray coats approached my son. Once in the evening something was wrong with the music, and the dancers were left standing on the floor a few moments. Leonie and her partner, a fine-looking man, with shoulder straps and brass buttons, stood so near me I could not avoid hearing their conversation.

"But what must the South do, Miss De Armand?" said the colonel.

"Do?" she said, lifting her eyes to his, haughtily. "Arm every man and boy in her borders, and march against the invader!"

Her voice rang like a bugle-call.

"It's all very well to talk that way, Miss Leonie," said Mabel, who stood near on Carlton's arm. "But for my part, I prefer peace and ease. What will the women and children do when your men and boys are all armed and gone?"

"Show the world that they are not unworthy their mothers of the Revolution. I do not believe in the degeneracy of the times so prated of, Colonel C. I believe that no true Southerner, man or woman, will be cowardly enough to hold aloof from the struggle now. We only needed rousing."

"I don't think you needed that," he said. And just then the band struck up and they moved away, the last words I heard being Mabel's sarcastic "Miss De Armand has a touch of heroics to-night." But I could not forget how Carlton's face lighted up while Leonie was speaking, and my heart was heavy with foreboding.

All the next day, with a sad heart I noticed that Carlton never came near my room, and his eye shunned me when we met. Neither Birdie nor Leonie said anything to me of the topic of the night before, but I knew their hearts were as heavy as

mine. In the evening we were sitting round the fire—Birdie in her favorite position, the bright head in my lap, and Leonie's clear voice filling the room as she read to us from Schiller. Ah me! I remember so well! It was "The Battle" she chose that night, her dark face glowing with enthusiasm as she read. She had grown more beautiful than ever, I thought, looking at her in the soft mellow light of the lamp. Suddenly Carlton came in, and the book fell with a ringing sound on the marble table, while I saw with amazement that the girl was trembling all over.

"Mother," my boy said, coming to my side, and speaking with difficulty—"mother—you must give your soldier boy your blessing before he goes."

That was all, and there was no need for more. I knew well then that I must lose him.

I sat very still for a few moments, then was roused by a low cry from Birdie. Turning to my boy, I clasped him to my bosom and held him there as I had done in his babyhood. "God bless my soldier boy!" was all I could say just then. Our Birdie clasped her brother about the neck, sobbing piteously, "O brother! my brother! why need you go?"

"Why, little sister, you would not have your brother a coward?" And he took her in his arms and soothed her into calmness. Then he turned to Leonie. "What does my other sister say?"

She was standing looking down at us, with a strange misty light in her eyes; but as he took both her hands in his, and forced her to look up at him, she burst into passionate tears, and without a word ran out of the room. I knew then as well as if they told me that in that one glance each read the other's heart, and knew at once how deep and hopeless their love for each other was. She was gone but a few minutes, however, when we heard her light step on the stair, and she came into the room, bearing in her hand a sword, so bright and glittering that it took my very breath to see it. It was an old-fashioned Spanish weapon of almost priceless value, the hilt and scabbard gleaming with jewels.

"I count no one worthier to wear my brave grandfather's sword than my dear brother," she said, simply. "Will he take it with Leonie's love?"

He did not dare to kiss her cheek or take

her in his arms, as he longed to do; he could only clasp her hand and look the love he could not speak. O, how in the midst of my own anguish, I pitied these two poor children in the days that followed! Watching Carlton struggling between love and duty, and suffering more because he saw, as I did, how pale Leonie's cheek was growing with the contest in her own bosom.

We were very busy getting him ready, and tried in loving work to forget our trouble. If it had not been for Leonie we would surely have broken down during those last days; but the brave unselfish girl hid her own grief to comfort ours, and I could only guess at the sleepless tearful nights that left her eyes so heavy.

The last evening Carlton came home early from Vere Lodge, and I noticed how haggard and unhappy he looked as he passed us where we were packing his trunk, and I could not help following him to his room. He was kneeling by his bedside, his head bowed in his hands, and his strong frame shaken with sobs. I put my arms around him, and, as in his boyhood, he told me all.

"I went to see Mabel to-night, mother, hoping for the best, and found her in a room full of other officers, dispensing smiles as lavishly to one as another. O mother! mother! in all this terrible trouble she has had no thought of anything but self; and actually said this evening that she congratulated herself on the war, since it made the neighborhood so much livelier. Well," he went on, in a dry hard voice, "I got a few moments alone with her, and humbled myself enough to ask to be released from our engagement, giving as a reason that I no longer loved her. Mother! she, a woman, a Virginian lady, refused to release me! and gloried in her triumph, giving as her reason, not that she loved me, but that she hated Leonie, and knew that I loved her! O mother, pray for your boy!" And weeping the while, I did pray for him—prayed until peace came to both our hearts, and we were strangely comforted.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next morning, in the gray light of the early dawn, we gathered on the piazza to watch our soldier off. Though my heart seemed dying within me, I tried to keep a cheerful face until he was gone, but Birdie

was prostrate with grief—hardly able to stand upon her trembling feet. Leonie was strangely gay, with a weird gleam in her dusky eyes. As Carlton kissed his sister good-by, he half led half carried her over to where Leonie and I were standing, and said in a husky voice, "Leonie, remember that I leave them *both* in your care—in your care—"

She looked up at him with a strange mirthless laugh that jarred upon my every nerve, and made Birdie's sad blue eyes look up at her as if she thought her crazy, and said, "Is not that strange?"

"No," he said. "You are able to take care of them—good-by, my mother. God bless and keep you—good-by, Leonie!" and he was gone.

Leonie rushed past us into the house and on into the library without a tear in her burning eyes, and I took Birdie into my room, where we mingled our tears and sobs together. After a while I thought of Leonie, and wondering that she had not come to us went to seek her. As I opened the library door I stumbled and almost fell over the lifeless unconscious form lying there just as she had fallen when she relaxed her iron command of nerve and mind when there was no further need for it. It was long before she recovered—then she bitterly reproached herself. "He told me to take care of *you*," she would say over and over again.

The days, and weeks, and months that followed seemed verily to move on leaden wings. Of course there were often letters from Carlton—at last the news that his corps was ordered "to the front," and his letters came to be but descriptions of battles, and our lives were feverish with anxiety. Six months passed away thus, and then the Southern force that had hitherto been in charge of our county were ordered away and we were left at the mercy of each newcomer. The first dreaded "Yankees" who swept to our door were truly gentlemen, who bivouacked upon the lawn and gave us no trouble. But when we marshalled the hands from the quarters next morning, more than half of them had gone with their deliverers! "Let us be thankful these are left," said Leonie, with a rueful smile, as she sent them off to their work again. Dear child, what should we have done without her? She was the ruling spirit of the house—ever cheerful and even gay herself, and

making us smile in spite of ourselves with her ready wit. Birdie had moved about the house since her brother left us, the very shadow of herself. She had always been delicate, never strong, and I did not become uneasy about her, until I noticed how ceaselessly Leonie watched her and cared for her. In my selfish sorrow over my boy's absence, I had not noticed the wasted form and the hectic flush on her pallid cheek. Our darling never complained, but often gently reproached her sister for her care. "You will tire yourself all out, darling, for me."

"That's my mission, don't you know?" Leonie would say, merrily. "Captain Girard would haunt me in my dreams if I did not take good care of you."

Mabel never came to see us now, but we often heard through the servants of balls and dinner parties at Vere Lodge, for both Federal and Confederate, and Mabel, still "Queen of Hearts" among them. Birdie never spoke her name—she had long ago fallen from her high place in my girl's heart.

As the days went on I grew so anxious about my child, that I gradually resigned the entire management of our reduced household into Leonie's hands, and gave all my time to Birdie. I wrote to Carlton, telling him our fears about his sister, and asking him to come home. He answered on the eve of an engagement: "The demand for men is so urgent, mother dear, that I cannot leave just now—a better day is coming soon though, darlings—Be of good cheer."

Leonie and I read this letter with faces averted from each other. We had not dared to tell him our worst fears, for we had not yet confessed them even to ourselves; but as we finished the letter our eyes involuntarily turned toward the sofa where Birdie lay asleep—in a slumber so like death—my gentle blue-eyed darling, with her waxen hands clasped over her bosom under the veil of golden hair. While we looked, there came to our startled ears the clatter of a horse's feet in the yard below. Leonie sprang to the window and I followed, as she threw it open. A colored boy from the quarters was there on a mule without saddle or bridle, his face of an ashy paleness.

"What is the matter, Nick?" called Leonie.

"O bress my soul, Miss Leo! De Yankees is a comin' shore dis time, dey'll kill us."

"Stop there!" imperatively now. "Where are they? Quick!"

"Down at Massa Vere's. Miss Mabel done sent me to tell yer."

"Put that mule up, Nick, and then come here," she said, coolly. Then to me, "Mother," she called me so always now, "it is nearly five miles to Colonel Vere's, you know—fortunately our valuables are all safely hid, and I can make almost everything secure before they get here. So don't be alarmed," and she ran out of the room. "I defy them now she said triumphantly when she returned. "They will find nothing more valuable here than our own precious selves. Have you wakened Birdie?" As she stooped above her, I saw the handle of one of a pair of pistols Carlton had given her the summer before, in her belt. "We had better go up stairs," and hardly had we reached the upper room, when the tramp of many feet was heard on the lawn, and the clang of the bayonets as the order "Halt!" was given.

"Lie still, Birdie," she said, and we went to the window which she threw wide open. A company of U. S. Infantry were drawn up beneath it. The commanding officer had his hand on the door as Leonie asked as coolly as she would of any stranger, "What is your pleasure, sir?"

"Our pleasure is to be inside this door," he said, with an oath. I trembled as the fearless girl answered:

"Sorry we can't oblige you, sir. Is there not enough room on the lawn?"

"Break that door down," was the quick order; but it was evidently only given to try us, for it was not obeyed.

"Good discipline among these Yankees," said Leonie, loud enough for them all to hear.

"By George—one of you climb up that lattice, boys, and stop that vixen's mouth with kisses!"

For an instant the hand that was in mine trembled, and then was withdrawn. "Of course," she said, "you can do that also, but the man that tries it will meet with this reception," and the little pistol gleamed in the sunset.

"Break that door down," almost screamed the drunken and infuriated officer, stamping up the porch.

I had not spoken, but now I said, "Stop, if you please, sirs," as the men advanced. "It is not worth your while to break down

the door. There is no one within but myself and daughters—what do you wish?"

"Inside, madam, as I said before," said the ruffian.

"If you will promise me that you will not disturb the room where my sick daughter is lying, I will open the door." I spoke quickly, for I saw the hot blood surge into Leonie's cheek at the insulting answer.

He hesitated a moment, then said, "Come, open it devilish quick then—we are in a deuced hurry."

"If you will open it, I will go," said Leonie, and before I could stop her she was half way down the stairs.

They came in, the whole noisy swearing crew, and thronged up the stairway.

"Now that you are in the house," said Leonie, "as a matter of curiosity I should like to know what there is here worth the trouble."

"You shall see, my pretty gal," said the captain, coarsely. "There was some silver belonging to this family once, wasn't there?"

"Yes, there was once, but several bands like yours have visited us since then," she said, and then left them to their own devices.

Birdie was by this time trembling in my arms. "O Leonie, how could you talk to them so? Were you not afraid?"

"No, Birdie, I don't believe I know what fear is. Hark!" as a shout came up from below. "They have found the wine in the cellar now!"

Then we sat there in an awful silence, listening as they tramped through the house, and hearing the crash of breaking furniture and china ware. At last we knew they had come into the parlor, and in spite of my remonstrances Leonie *would* go down, as we heard a dozen axes it seemed to me at work.

"Just a little reminder of our visit, my saucy miss," I heard the captain say, as she reached the door.

"I see," said Leonie, calmly. "Pray leave us the pieces for firewood, at least. Thank you."

And then we heard the tramp of their heavy feet as they left the house, and Leonie barred the door behind them. She would have stopped me as I went down, but determined to know the worst I went on. Then what a scene of devastation met my eyes! I will not try to describe it, but as I turned sorrowfully away, Leonie sprang forward

just in time to catch Birdie's fainting form in her arms. We laid her on the bed, and Leonie turned to me with a wicked flash of her eye and stamp of the little foot. "O, I wish I were a man!"

I will do the northern soldiers the justice to say that though we were visited by many of them, this band was the only one that ever molested us, while some of our neighbors suffered just as much from the plunderers of the southern army. When Leonie made her tour of inspection after the marauders were gone, she came back, her face a mixture of anger and amusement.

"Mother, don't you think there is not a contraband left on the place but Nick and July? And I believe they would have gone if I had not worked on their feelings by having a good cry before them. And you know I wondered how Colonel Vere escaped—Listen to this note—" Dear Leo. Do send me word how you have fared—I am so anxious. They treated us very courteously, as we passed for very good Union people. Send me word by Nick." She tossed the note in the fire in contemptuous silence, and none of us ever spoke of it again.

We did not separate that night, and it was well we did not. Leonie read to us until a late hour, and then I fell asleep beside Birdie. And it seemed but a moment until I was awakened by that most dreadful cry "Fire! fire!" ringing in my ears. With a wild cry I sprang to my feet. The room was full of smoke. Leonie was at the window with Birdie in her arms, and outside the cry was ringing. A boyish face was at the window, and Stuart Grey, one of our neighbor boys, sprang inside.

"Do not be scared, dear ladies—there is really no danger! Give me Miss Birdie—I will take her down first—Gently now!" and the noble boy disappeared. Leonie snatched a blanket from the bed and wrapped me in it just as Stuart came back, and before I could utter a word he was half way down the ladder with me. I saw a glare of light in the room as we reached the ground, but Leonie was right behind us. "Where is Birdie?" she asked.

"In our carriage there—mother sent it over." And putting his arm around me as tenderly as would my own son, Stuart led me on. I did not turn to look back, but I could hear the flames devouring our home as we passed through the crowd on the lawn. We found Birdie lying insensible in Mrs.

Grey's motherly arms; and the carriage drove on. Mrs. Grey was a northern soldier's wife—I could not help thinking of this, and she was the only one of our friends who offered us a home. We had no time for conjectures over the fire that night, so alarming was Birdie's condition. When she did at last unclothe her blue eyes, they wandered wildly from one to another without recognition. For many weary days we watched her, and she grew no better. The soldiers who had visited us that day were the last of those who were retreating before Longstreet, and in a few days the southern soldiers were in quiet possession.

We could only surmise the cause of the fire. There was a great deal of inflammable material in the cellars, and a spark from a cigar would have been sufficient. Nothing was saved. One day, Mrs. Grey and Leonie had insisted on my lying down to rest while they watched by Birdie, and thoroughly worn out, I soon fell asleep. I was awakened by tears falling on my face, and saw Leonie bending over me. "Mother," she whispered, "open your eyes, dear!"

The next moment a pair of strong arms were about me, and my boy's lips were pressed to mine. Then all the pent-up sorrow and grief burst forth in a shower of tears on his shoulder—I felt so secure! so safe! and so very happy. For a long time none of us spoke. Leonie was very pale and there were traces of tears on her cheek, but a light in her eyes I had never seen there before. At last I asked, "Have you seen Birdie?"

"O mother—mother—how can I bear it—I have not seen her."

Just then Mrs. Grey opened the door and beckoned us. When we went in Birdie was lying back on her white pillow, a clear rational light in the blue eye. She just held out both arms to her brother and laid her tired head on his shoulder. "I am going home, brother," she whispered. "I prayed to see you once again, and God has granted my prayer. Don't cry, darlings. Over the river where we shall meet all is peace."

The blue eyes were wide open now and fixed on nothing earthly, while a strange rare smile rested on the sweet lips.

"Kiss me, mother. You will miss your baby a while, but think! I am going to meet dear father—I promised I would come—"

With trembling lips and a breaking heart I bent over and kissed the lips fast growing

cold in death. The voice was weaker when she spoke again.

"Leonie, sweet sister, give me your dear hand again. We have loved each other very dearly, and will love each other still. Kiss me for the last time," and as Leonie bent above her, she placed the hand she held in Carlton's. "Love each other," she whispered again, "and sometimes in your happiness think of one who loved you both." Then she was very still. One other word the dear lips syllabled. "Father!" she said, and threw her arms up as if to some waiting angel-guide. Then the blue veined lids closed over the pure eyes and our darling was with God.

Leonie took the fragile form from Carlton's arms, and he led me to the door. They tell me, as I reached it I fell and was unconscious for hours. Leonie's hands arrayed my baby for the tomb, clipped from the head three long bright curls, and let the rest fall as of yore in a golden shimmering veil over the faultless hands and silent heart. When next I saw her she lay as if sleeping, I pressed one last kiss on the icy face and they bore her to her last resting-place by her father's side.

CHAPTER V.

A WEEK went by in almost unconscious agony. I knew that Carlton and Leonie were very busy about something those long, long dreary days, but I knew or cared for nothing. At last one day they came to my darkened room together, and Carlton said: "Mother, it seems cruel to disturb you now, but to-morrow I must leave you. I have fitted up for you and Leonie a little home, the little cottage where Aunt Nelly used to live. Mrs. Grey offered you a home here, but I knew you would both prefer this—am I right?"

"O yes, my son, you are always right, but I shall never be happy again."

For the first time Leonie broke down, and burying her head in my lap sobbed as if her heart would break. Bitterly reproaching myself when I thought of how bravely the noble girl had struggled with her own grief, I stooped to raise her, but Carlton was before me. He kissed the tears from her eyes, and as she hid her face on his shoulder, he said:

"Mother, our lost darling gave this dear girl to me, and as a daughter to you. Will you not tell her that you will try

to be happy with her while I am gone?"

The blessed truth flashed on my mind, and he took me, too, in his arms. Then in spite of Leonie's entreaties, I told him just all she had been to us during his absence—

"I knew it," he said, with a proud smile, "when I gave you to her care."

"But Mabel—Mabel! Carlton—" His face clouded then as he answered:

"Mabel married a Federal officer, and is gone away with him; we have nothing more to do with her. Come now, dear mother, your little home is waiting for you."

Mrs. Grey went with us to the cottage, where my widowed sister had lived before God took her home. It was a little gothic cottage with no display about it, and fitted up very neatly. From my window there was a view of the graveyard where were my buried treasures, and in the long days after Carlton left I used to sit in the little bay window and watch the sunbeams fall over the grassy mounds. He left us next day and our lives dragged wearily on. Up to within the last few months, the remittances from Leonie's bankers had been punctual, but now they failed, and we were almost poverty-stricken. I need not dwell on our life, though. Thousands of others have told the story far better than can my feeble pen. With vast acres of rich land lying round us, all our own, we struggled on from day to day with the gaunt wolf, poverty. At first "July" had stayed to cook for us, but she grew restless finally, and one morning was missing. But Nick was devoted to Leonie, and would not leave her, and with his help she did the work. The dainty hands that had been kept like roseleaves, grew wonderfully familiar with cooking utensils, and often her inventive genius was put to test to find ways and means for a "meal fit for mother," and she grew wise in receipts for rye coffee, sodaless bread and sugarless preserves. Mrs. Grey gave her some very valuable assistance, and Stuart became almost indispensable to us. The brave spirit of the girl never failed. Always the same, steady, cheerful, smiling. That she suffered from our trouble as much as I, I never doubted, and if she had faltered I think I must have died, but she never did. The first year we heard from Carlton often—then came almost two years of utter darkness, when the silence was like that of the grave. I gave him up at once, and settled into utter despair; but if Leonie faltered in her faith a moment she never let me know it.

"He is safe, mother—I feel it—I know it, without knowing why. I just know God does not mean to give us this last greatest affliction."

"O Leonie, far rather would I know he was dead than to have this awful uncertainty—"

"O no, mother, I would not! Think how long Captain Grey was a prisoner."

And at last God rewarded her for her faith. When our hearts, weary with war, were ready to cry "Peace on any terms!" came Lee's surrender.

"Now we shall hear from Carlton," was Leonie's sole comment on the news. All the fierce pride in and for the south had died out of our waiting hearts, and we welcomed dawning peace even though the stars and stripes had conquered. When peace was declared Colonel Grey came home and came directly to the cottage.

"You will help me find him, Colonel Grey," said Leonie, as she met him at the door.

"If I can, dear Miss Leonie;" and he was faithful to his promise.

One day Stuart came in hurriedly. "There is a returned prisoner at the gate, Miss Leonie, who wants to see you." Her face grew deathly pale, and she pressed her hand upon her heart. "I cannot go," she gasped, and the soldier came in with Colonel Grey. He was very shabby, poor fellow, and his right sleeve hung empty at his side. His hat was slouched over his face, and there was nothing familiar in his walk. I did not know him, and can there be a keener-eyed love than a mother's? Ah yes! Before his foot had crossed the threshold Leonie's arms were around his neck, the disfiguring hat was pushed aside, and Carlton's one arm clasped us both. That one happy moment made us forget all our sorrow, and three happier people could not be found than we. Leonie made us both come in the kitchen while she got supper, and as I watched my boy's proud loving eyes following the dear household angel in her every movement, I rejoiced in his happiness. His story was a short one. Those twenty-two long months had been spent in prison at Camp Chase, after he had recovered from the amputation of his arm. Well, my story too, is almost done. A little while after, my two dear ones were married, and with Leonie's recovered wealth built them a handsome house on the site of the old one, and we are again prosperous and happy.

LEOPOLD CASTRANI.

BY KATE SEAFOAM.

He was of medium height, slightly but compactly built, with a dark olive complexion, as richly tinted on cheeks and lips as that of the most lovely brunette; abundant black hair, glossy as the raven's wing, straight as an Indian's—although an impressive person if the strongly-marked, peculiar face had not been literally illumined by the most brilliant changeable eyes, so deeply, darkly-black, so intensely magnetic, that they held you enchained by a glance even against your will, and a musical voice deep and manly, yet richly tender.

Leopold Castrani was a Cuban by birth, of Spanish extraction, fiery, vehement of temperament, yet most winningly attractive. He was a music-teacher by profession when he came among us suddenly. When I returned from a short vacation among the old granite hills, our usually quiet town was greatly excited over this wonderful stranger, this exquisite musician who had been in Hilton about a week. It usually took about

that length of time to begin to move our slow steady-going place, and now enthusiasm was at its height about him. He must be a genius, something truly remarkable, I concluded, before I listened for quite an hour to his praises eloquently sounded by my sister; but when it came to my little sweetheart being seemingly as enthusiastically interested, a deeper feeling than laughing curiosity gave me several unpleasant twinges, whereat I became moody, and quickly understanding the change in my appearance, she teased me unmercifully about my foolish jealousy, then earnestly assured me I need have no fears, as the exquisite Cuban was already deeply enamored with the acknowledged belle of our town, beautiful Irene Henley.

"And there's something so strange, really queer about it, Phil," she continued, in a lower confidential tone; "if we didn't know all about Irene, if she hadn't always lived among us and been so good and perfect,

should say there was some mystery, a little deception about it, that they had met before and did not wish it to be known. She looked and acted so queer when she was introduced to him; she flushed so, then became deathly pale, trembled and faltered as if she would have fallen. It was at Mrs. Anderson's they met first, and I stood close beside her when the introduction was given. You see, Irene was away on a visit when he came, and he had been here several days before she met him—and he, why, his wonderful eyes got as big and bright, I was going to say blacker than ever, but that could not be, they could not darken any when he saw her, and it was as if his dark face grew radiant, but it instantly changed, and was for a moment so stern and defiant, and there was such a cruel glitter to his brilliant eyes when she coldly recognized the introduction, then turned abruptly from him; but I noticed his eyes, since that time, have wholly lost the watchful restless look they had at first, that used to make me so nervous. There is really something so queer about it," she concluded, in a puzzled way.

"Possibly his admiration was so evident as to shock her delicacy, and he abashed and irritated by her coldness," I ventured in explanation of the seeming mystery.

"No, it's something more than that, Phil, I am sure it is," she earnestly replied.

Somehow Lillie's words haunted me, and I caught myself speculating several times about this probable mystery, and this feeling, intangible as it appeared really, to me, was but increased when I saw Irene. She had changed greatly; the bright laughing blue eyes had taken a startled look that was pitiful to see; the delicately rounded cheeks were becoming thin and colorless. She was a very beautiful, a sweet lovely maiden, nearest to perfection in female loveliness of any one I had ever seen (always excepting, of course, my own little winsome lassie), if I might be allowed as a judge of female loveliness. Irene's form was seemingly perfect in gracefully rounded symmetry, a gliding elegant carriage, added to a faultless face of almost infantile fairness, soft blooming freshness, eyes deeply, clearly blue, taking at times in earnestness or deep thought the misty purplish sheen of dewy violets. Her hair alone was a luxuriant crown of beauty, burnished gold in color, silky and wavy.

Soon I met the wonderful musician at a

social gathering. His first impression upon my mind was pleasing, for he was a very fine-looking man, but gradually, as the evening advanced, and involuntarily I covertly watched him, a sense of uneasiness and impending evil grew upon me.

It was quite late when Irene Henley entered the brilliant drawing-room in her peculiarly graceful way. Instantly the Spaniard's eyes lost that wary restlessness, and grew brilliant with satisfied exultation as he boldly watched her every movement. Yes, I soon decided that there was some mystery, that this handsome gentlemanly musician held this lovely maiden by some strange but now irritating power, whatever it might have been heretofore. The color deepened, came and went fitfully on her fair cheeks, her eyes had a weary restless look in their clear depths, assuming at times a wistfulness pitiful to see. Evidently it was very trying to act the beautiful careless belle, subjected to this nearly maddening scrutiny.

After considerable instrumental music, most brilliantly executed by the teacher, a certain ballad, old but exquisitely sweet and expressive, was desired by one of the ladies. The gentleman smilingly assented, and then turning abruptly upon his seat, bowing lowly to Miss Henley, he said:

"You will sing it with me, please, Miss Henley?"

Was it a polite suave request, or a command?

Certainly, it was a command from the cruel compelling eyes, however tender and persuasive the voice was. Her face was most expressive, painfully so. Every bit of color left it, and for an instant the queenly head was very erect, the soft eyes coldly defiant, but under that bold look, subtle and intent, a swift wave of color tinged the whole of the white face, the fair lids nearly closed over the repelling eyes, the lips, unclosed as if to refuse although no words came, quivered pitifully, then closed tightly with an indrawn sigh, and without a word she rose and stood beside him. He glanced up and a softer light changed for a moment the daring eyes as he looked at her, then he ran his fingers lightly over the keys, settling away gracefully upon the prelude. How quiet the spacious room became the moment these two sweet voices rose in softly combining liquid melody. A more exquisite commingling of sweet sounds one could not well desire or imagine. There was a slight

tremor just perceptible in her sweet tones when she first began, but they gradually rose in superb power as she sang, seemingly lost to everything but the sweet sentiments she was rendering. I stood where I could see the faces of both and note every movement of each plainly. At the close of the last stanza he raised his eyes boldly to hers, giving a still sweeter intonation to the loving words, making them seemingly his own earnest tender appeal to her, calling that fitful color to her face again, and compelling her to meet for an instant that impassioned gaze. A slight frown contracted the fair brow, and the defiant look changed the soft eyes, calling to his face a mocking smile, curving the full mouth even while he sang sweetly, and a cruel glitter flashed from the black eyes, beneath which her gaze fell tremulously again. Ugh! I felt as if a snake had crawled over me! Her manner was so peculiar that at times I feared she really loved this handsome cruel man, and would not acknowledge it, else why this bold exultation in his manner towards her? I could not conceive of any other compelling power, and I was forced to see and acknowledge it.

A while after this incident, I called with Lillie on Irene one morning, in relation to a proposed picnic. A few moments passed in lively chatter, and then a servant entered and presented a card. That peculiar look passed over Irene's face, then she said to the servant:

"Tell the gentleman I am engaged at present, and desire to be excused."

But her face flushed and her eyes flashed with annoyance, when the messenger soon returned, handing her another card with a few words written with pencil beneath the name. That restless hunted look clouded her face as she clutched the card tightly an instant in her white fingers, and then in a constrained manner she said:

"You may admit the gentleman;" and turning to Lillie with an unnatural mocking laugh, she continued:

"Our musical celebrity is really important."

The next moment Mr. Castrani stood smiling and bowing lowly, as exquisite as ever, before us. No one could have been more suave and gentlemanly, nor have striven to be more entertaining than he was; but Irene was so ill at ease, so haughtily repellant to his amiability that a constraint

fell upon all of us, and we soon left them alone together. She did not urge us to remain longer; evidently she wished an opportunity to rid herself of his obnoxious presence.

"I do think it's just dreadful, Will, the way that man acts by dear Irene. Did you see how she looked and acted? I say it is too bad! What do you suppose it is, Will?" Lillie said to me as we rode away.

I assured her I did think it was too bad, and very strange, to say the least, but yet our idle speculation and wonder did not enlighten us any, but we were greatly surprised, and wondered and conjectured still more, when the daring Cuban came to the picnic as Irene's escort, more exultant and suave than ever, paying her the most marked attentions all through the long bright day, despite her evident weariness and annoyance. He could not have been more presuming if he had been her husband. I wondered how Harry Carlton would like it; he was so proudly loving, yet jealously exacting of this beautiful lady to whom he had been engaged for nearly a year; and knowing this made the part Irene was acting seem doubly strange to us all, for their singular appearance had now become a subject of general comment, and I wished Harry would come and put an end to this masquerading.

Just when I was the most fidgety, getting really vexed over it for his sake, I was happily surprised and satisfied by meeting the dear fellow on the street. He had just arrived, should remain a week or two and be with us during the "Fair at Groton," he told me. I was greatly relieved and rejoiced at his presence at this time, although he was always gladly, heartily welcomed by me. He was a noble manly fellow, and well worthy of the love of any girl, a rising young lawyer, already claiming quite a notoriety in his profession in an adjoining State.

Harry had not been with us but a few days when I noticed a change in his looks and manner; the frank brown eyes had lost in a measure their earnest joyousness, and he was abrupt, almost surly, in his ways. There was quite a falling off in social gatherings and gayeties of all kinds about this time, the coming fair engrossing all attention, and causing the usual quiet preceding a greater anticipated event; so I had not the opportunity of observing the Spaniard and Miss Henley, but I readily attributed

the change in my friend's manner to him. The first day of the fair dawned bright and auspicious, a gentle rain the day preceding having laid the dust finely.

It was a pleasant drive of about ten miles out to the fair grounds. About a mile out, turning abruptly to the right, was what we called the "old road," less travelled, a trifle less direct, but a more pleasant route we considered it; so I drove out that way. After a quiet cosy drive of three miles or so, we came out on to the new road, and directly in front of us was a very stylish-looking turnout, a light phaeton, in which a gentleman, erect and debonair, whom I soon recognized as Mr. Castrani, sat. He was driving closely behind another carriage, faster or slower, just as they rode, he followed closely; and now a turn in the road revealed to us the occupants of that carriage, Harry Carlton and Irene Henley. That he followed them purposely I felt quite sure, it was so like what I had seen of the impertinent persistency of the man. Constantly through the day, also, I saw that he still followed them, seemingly giving no heed to aught else, walking, riding, even halting when they did; and more than once I saw Harry's florid cheek blanch and his lips pressed tightly over his set teeth as he glanced at the Cuban. He scarcely spoke to any one, hardly noticed Harry by as much as a glance, but those basilisk eyes scarcely left Irene's lovely face. It was well, I thought several times, that Harry had not my fiery temper, for I should have struck him ere half that day had passed. Yet more than ever was I convinced that in some way he held her in his power, judging by her appearance, and the look his face wore at times was as a man who considered himself deeply wronged, and in his own way bided his time and sought revenge.

Home again he followed Harry and Irene in the same way; and as they drove up to the gate, having arranged at the grounds to spend a social hour together at Lillie's, he passed slowly, lifted his hat and bowed lowly to Irene, and in a frightened half-dazed way she returned his ostentatious salutation, Harry's brown eyes, literally blazing, fixed scornfully upon her face. The lion was fairly roused, I found, and our social hour was much like the ominous stillness which sometimes precedes the tempest. I knew the reckoning must come now, and I knew what Harry was when fully roused.

I was not surprised to see him dashing off to the fair alone the next morning, and I looked anxiously for the Cuban. I felt it would not be safe for them to meet then. He did not appear until noon, and then I saw there was a different look in the black eyes. He had been to see Irene, I concluded, and found her desperate enough now to defy him. I knew Harry and Irene loved each other dearly, with the one love of a life, but I knew how proud both were, and I feared for them. I saw Mr. Castrani seemed to be looking for some one, and I thought anxiously of Harry; but just then my favorite horse came on the track, and the trotting claiming my undivided attention, Harry and his love affair were for a time forgotten.

But soon a sudden anxiety beset me, a nervousness quite unaccountable, and hastily excusing myself, I left Lillie with some lady friends, and went in search of Harry, as anxious as if he had been a mere boy. A short distance out of the crowd, and my nervousness began to take tangible shape. A crowd was collected around something, all talking and gesticulating excitedly. I pushed my way furiously through them, and that something proved to be my friend lying prone upon the ground, apparently dead. All that I was able to learn at the time was that a few near them had heard Harry and a dark handsome man, as they described the Cuban, a stranger to them, had a quarrel, and he had quickly drawn a pistol and shot Harry.

He was not dead, but quite seriously, although not fatally, wounded, it proved upon examination. His life had been saved by a mere chance, the position taken just at the moment the pistol was discharged; an intent on Harry's part to strike his foe had brought the vital part aimed at a little out of line.

Search was made for the Spaniard, but he could not be found. Harry was taken to the hotel, the wound carefully attended to, and then I returned to Lillie, and hastily informing her of what had happened, I drove home rapidly, and returning, took my place beside my friend.

Ill news travels fast, and by the time Harry's mishap was made known to Irene it was magnified into a horrible affair, he was nearly killed, must surely die.

He did not prove to be a very tractable patient, the mind and heart were so ill at

ease; thwarted love does not usually make any of us very saintly. He was extremely dull and mopeish that day. All of the morning there had been a wistful far-away look in the restless dark eyes, and I knew that in spirit he was yearning for Irene, that pride was waging a fierce battle with love. By noon he was as fretful and unreasonable as a cross child. I tried my best to amuse him, to be amiable, for I really pitied the big baby; but all the while I suppose he wished me far away, for he scowled at me continually, and sought to draw me into uncomfortable arguments. I ought, I presume, to have left him alone to dream of her, if he could not see her.

Finally I began to lose patience with him, and was about to leave in disgust, when there was a rap upon the door, and the waiter announced, "A lady to see Mr. Carlton." The door closed, and lifting her heavy veil, the lovely but pale startled face of Irene Henley was revealed to us.

I experience a most satisfactory feeling when I think of it. You should have seen my big baby just then. I ought, I know, to have left them at once; it was unpardonable rudeness to linger a moment, but—well, the extreme pleasure of seeing the joyous transfiguration of his moody face, and the sweet fitful changes in hers, where ineffable love, pity, pride and maidenly diffidence struggled for supremacy—there never could, under any circumstances, be the least awkwardness about graceful Irene Henley—fully repaid me for the meanness of lingering, and the contempt they probably felt toward me for it.

She took a hasty step or two toward him as she raised her veil, then halted, her face changing so prettily, while he started forward, then glared fiercely at me, and following his gaze, she blushed, and drew back in such sweet confusion I was quite charmed myself; but deeming prudence better than gallantry in this case, I quickly withdrew.

It sometimes happens that our worst misfortunes, seemingly, prove in reality blessings. It certainly would have been a fierce struggle in those proud hearts ere either would have yielded, if this serious affair had not brought its softening influence to bear upon them before pride, in its cruel wantonness had chilled tenderness. But now love and pity wrought a most desirable happy work in their hearts; love held them in closer, more endearing thrall than ever.

Later, when they were happily married, I learned more of the Cuban from my dear Lillie, Irene's confidential friend, in whom she at length confided, telling her the secret that had caused her so much unhappiness, the girlish folly that came so near to separating two fond noble hearts.

When Irene Henley was at a boarding-school in a distant city, she read, with several other young ladies, an advertisement in a daily paper, inserted by a gentleman who represented himself as a stranger, lonely, and desiring a lady correspondent for mutual pleasure. They laughingly proposed writing to the lonely gentleman, and several of them did write, "just for fun," some humorous lively letters, some sentimental schoolgirl epistles, but Irene, it seemed, wrote wholly from the controlling impulse of the moment, no studied effort, but a racy spirited letter; no sentimental effusion, but very much like a talk with a friend, and unconsciously revealing to the keen Spaniard much of the real nature of the fair writer. In this strong individuality, naturalness, with all her exquisite beauty, lay Irene Henley's greatest charm. In a few days she received an earnest grateful letter from the stranger, and—well, letters continued to pass secretly between them, Irene concealing in even from her school friends that she answered any but the first letter, which they knew she received. From grateful friendly letters, his, before long, assumed a warmer lover-like tone. This startled Irene, and for some time she did not reply; then came another letter entreating her to write, telling her in glowing eulogistic words, subtly, delicately-phrased, how much her letters were to him, how dependent he had become upon her friendship—all exceedingly flattering to a young lady; and then this secrecy only added just the spice of romance needed to make it still more agreeable to her youthful nature, and she answered that letter, and more followed, till, from the grateful friend, he became an avowed persistent lover, begging for an interview to see his loved one. Again Irene was startled, but the wily man, many years her senior, overcame her fears again, and made the way seem easier to her for that interview. To the inquiry whether she had friends near New York where she might visit and he could see her, as she would not allow him to come to her, she told him that a part of her next vacation would be spent with her maternal aunt who resided a few

miles from that city, but she would not permit him to come there, either, as it would lead to unpleasant questioning that she shrank from; and further, she should not try to deceive her aunt if questioned. But, nothing daunted, the ardent lover met and surmounted this obstacle bravely, till it seemed but an easy matter to Irene, who was now really interested in this stranger, to stop over a train on the way and allow him to see her at a hotel specified by him.

She was young and thoughtless, following unadvised and without caution the bent of her girlish inclinations, dazed by a romantic infatuation, and she consented, to reap in a few years bitter punishment for her folly. The meeting did but increase the infatuation of both, and the correspondence continued as that of affianced lovers for nearly a year longer, he urging her repeatedly to have their relations made known, to allow him to visit her; but from this she shrank more and more. Being naturally truthful, and frank by nature, this duplicity, it seemed to her, would be a lasting disgrace if made known. Finally, loving her madly, as I know he did, he became importunate, threatening to visit her, to claim her parents' consent to their marriage, whether she was willing or not. Irene was greatly alarmed, and had to exert her powers of persuasion to the uttermost to keep him quiet; and then, to add to her discomfiture, about this time she became acquainted with Harry Carlton. Their acquaintance soon ripened into earnest congenial friendship, a decided preference on his part soon manifesting itself—a preference, alas, under the circumstances, most trying to Irene's nobility of character; for she found her whole heart and soul responding to this affection with a power not to be resisted, when she felt herself in honor bound to another. Her letters naturally became short and cold, and he grew more persistent, until she could endure it no longer; and she wrote to him that she did not love him well enough to marry him, and desired to be released from the engagement. Of course he was deeply aggrieved, as he had a right to feel that she had wronged him greatly, and he sent her most reproachful letters expressive of his feelings, refusing to release her from the engagement. And now, just as she was suffering most deeply from the result of her folly, she had another persistent lover to meet, to whom she found it impossible to say no. Suddenly the Cuban's letters ceased,

and believing that he had at last yielded to her desire, she gave a favorable answer to Harry's suit. There was a silence of three months on her former lover's part, and then she was rudely awakened to her mistake, to the fact that

"It is good to off with the old love
Before you are on with the new."

She one day received a letter in that well-known hand, that now made her heart quail, in which he told her of the death of his mother in most tender pathetic terms, appealing to her for sympathy in his great affliction; of his own subsequent severe illness, and again entreated her to see him, that he might urge his claim in person, believing it might yet be well with them. But this she knew now to be an impossibility, and this she wrote him, expressing her friendly sympathy for his grief.

Again there was a terrible silence, to be to her terribly broken by his appearance at Hilton. The rest is known; and many and severe were the threatening scenes she passed through with him until the *denouement* came, and she was forced to tell the whole with shame and contrition to Harry after he was wounded. Before that her courage failed her, and she had hoped, up to the time of the fair, that he would see the folly of his persistency, and leave, without forcing upon her the unpleasant duty of making her folly known; but that day brought matters to a crisis, and, exasperated by the Spaniard's threats to expose all, even to her meeting him, a stranger, at his request, at the hotel, by which he led her to see she had compromised herself in the eyes of her friends, Harry's taunts and commanding desire for an explanation of the Cuban's manner toward her, was more than she could bear. Harsh words followed, in which she flung their betrothal ring at his feet. Then one more stormy torturing scene with the Cuban, the second morning of the fair, in which she was driven to desperation and defied him; then frightful news that Harry must die by his hand. Truly, she was punished for her recklessness.

Nothing more was heard of Mr. Castrani, who was, I think, really deserving of pity for his keen disappointment, until, about six months after their marriage, Harry received a package by express, containing several of the most ardent letters written by his wife to Mr. Castrani; but they were destroyed unread.